AUGUST - SEPTEMBER 1972

BING

Edited by JOHN BASSETT

NO. 27

THE INTERNATIONAL CROSBY CIRCLE

REG BRISTO

BING 'N BASIE

BING 'N BASIE

BING 'N BASIE

Bing Crosby

* WITH THE MILLS BROS.

Temptation
* My Honey's Lovin' Arms
How Deep is The Ocean?
Let's Put Out The Light

THERE ARE EXACTLY NINE COPIES LEFT OF AN EP RECORD, PLAYABLE AT 33⅓ rpm with BING CROSBY singing on one side with DEAN MARTIN, and on the reverse, with ANDY WILLIAMS, in medleys of Crosby classics.

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REG BRISTO, 7, Greenmeadow Close, C W M B R A N MON NP4 3NR.

This price, incidentally, is below the actual private pressing cost.

FIRST COME, FIRST SERVED!

Thanks for letter & greetings.
See ya in Leeds!
Reg

INTERNATIONAL CROSBY CIRCLE - "BING" - REG BRISTO, 7, GREENMEADOW CLOSE.
CWMBRAN MON NP4 3NR.

Dear Ken ,

Your annual subscription of £1.05 p now appears due. Will you please remit early so that I may plan the next issue economically and thus help to prevent any increase in the annual rate. Your interest and support is much appreciated.

Reg

REG BRISTO.

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"BING" - the official quarterly magazine of THE INTERNATIONAL CROSBY CIRCLE

The magazine is published quarterly in February, May, August and November, and issued free to registered club members.

MEMBERSHIP RATES
British Isles, Commonwealth and Europe: £1.05
USA: 3 dollars
Other countries: British Isles equivalent

Please make all subscriptions payable to THE INTERNATIONAL CROSBY CIRCLE and forward to the Secretary, Reg Bristo

An 'X' here indicates that your subscription has expired.

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TAPE CROSBY

"Tape Crosby" operates as an independent feature of "BING", and consists of a frequently changing taped 'programme' of Crosbyana which circulates regularly amongst a limited number of members. Interested ICC members are invited to contact FRED REYNOLDS who will advise them when a vacancy occurs within the 'circuit'. Write to Fred at 69 Heathmere Avenue, Yardley, Birmingham. Please enclose a S.A.E.

"BING" - dedicated to the greatest of them all, and the luckiest admirers in the world! The magazine has an international circulation and all members are invited to contribute to its pages.

"BING" ISSUE 27, AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 1972

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STOP PRESS!

This page, being the last to be typed, enables one or two last minute items to be mentioned before we finally 'go to press'.

Firstly, a 'go slow' at POLYDOR has resulted in the non-appearance of the "BING 'N' BASIE" album in certain parts of the country. Southend-on-Sea is affected thus, and consequently we have been unable to review this disc as extensively as the CORAL issues. We do have knowledge of the sleeve presentation, however. As with the Christmas album, the cover of "BING 'N' BASIE" is laminated on both sides, the front of which sports full-face colour paintings of Bing and Count Basie. The painting of Bing is not unlike that of the portrait featured on the cover of "BING CROSBY SINGS THE GREAT COUNTRY HITS" album issued by Capitol (T.833). The reverse side shows a number of small black-and-white photographs taken during the recording session. One such photograph reveals Bing with an unusual expression on his face. When recently asked to explain the nature of this curious pose, he simply replied: "Just whistlin'".

The US album mentioned on page 32 of this issue is entitled "WRAP YOUR TROUBLES IN DREAMS" (RCA Vintage Series, LPV-584), and contains the following tracks: Mary/Ol' Man River/Make Believe/Lovable/I'm Afraid Of You (all with Whiteman); It Must Be True/Fool Me Some More/The Little Things In Life/ I Surrender Dear/Wrap Your Troubles In Dreams/Just A Gigolo/One More Time/ Thanks To You/I'm Gonna Get You/ I'm Through With Love/Just One More Chance (all with Arnheim). The last two titles are the first commercial release of the songs taken from Bing's first radio broadcast. Available only in the States, it is likely that copies will soon be imported by specialist record shops. However, members are advised to watch for the possible release of this disc by RCA in England.

Finally, for those of you who would pay a fiver for an LP that included an authentic Crosby cough, you might be interested to learn that 'our man' is to be found on a US Columbia album (ML.4340) entitled "I CAN HEAR IT NOW - 1919-1932". Narrated by Edward R.Murrow, this disc is part of a set which deals with certain people and events that have contributed towards America's history. No....Bing doesn't exactly cough on this disc, but a 25-second snatch of "Please" ('32 version) is included in the section dealing with show business. For the fanatical collector only; the price is almost £3 !

A reminder to those members who have not yet claimed their copy of the recent ICC project, "THE A TO Z OF BING CROSBY":- This publication is now available from our Secretary, priced at £1 per copy. Early receipt of remittance will be appreciated. Priority given to those members whose names appear on our reservation file. Additional requirements will be handled in due course, but at the present time it is unlikely that spare copies will be available. It is suggested that an early reservation will certainly ensure acquisition of all forthcoming ICC publications. Our second project, "A BING CROSBY L.P.-OGRAPHY" is in the final stages of completion, and publication is expected to be early in the new year. Reservations will now be taken by the Editor. This project is expected to be in a similar price range to the "A TO Z", but the exact price will be announced nearer publication date. The L.P.-Ography, the first of its kind issued to Crosby collectors anywhere, will comprise of a representative listing, detailing in both simplified and comprehensive sections, the majority of Bing Crosby's LP issues released since the mid-fifties to the present day. All known re-issues and overseas equivalents will be shown, and the entire booklet will be enclos in an attractive, glossy wrap-round cover, and made available only to a limited number of collectors. Avoid the disappointment of being unable to possess a copy of this work, by placing a reservation now. When the time comes, you will be asked to forward your remittance and a copy will be dispatched immediately.

TAPED CROSBYANA by BOB ROBERTS

Strict legal copyright clauses appertain to private tape recordings for obvious reasons. However, certain facilities involving the recording of non-commercial Bing Crosby material are available to all members of the ICC, without offence to anyone. Further details will be made available to those members who would care to write, but please enclose a S.A.E. for a prompt reply. Tapes are of the highest possible quality, and complete satisfaction is guaranteed. Write: BOB ROBERTS, 56 Thorold Road, Chatham, Kent.

"MEMORY LANE" is published quarterly by the 1930's Record Society and Al Bowlly Circle, and covers all your favourite artistes and bands of the 20's, 30's and 40's - Jazz, Dance Bands, Instrumentalists, Vocalists, Music Hall, etc. The magazine is nicely printed and includes many photographs. Subscription of £1 covers both the magazine and the free loan of special tapes and cassettes, produced by the highly-praised "Memory Lane" studios. Send £1, or 25p for a sample copy, to: RAY PALLETT, 21 GRANGE ROAD, LEIGH-ON-SEA, ESSEX, or write for further information enclosing a S.A.E.

A "must" for all collectors of vintage 78's.....

THE GUNN REPORT Many hundreds of 78's and occasional LP's for sale in each issue, including Jazz, Dance Bands, Brass Bands, Personality, Vocal, Light Orchestral, etc.
In addition, there are articles, comment, information and advice.... all presented in an inimitable and lighthearted style.
Accept a FREE SAMPLE COPY and full details of subscriptions, by writing to the Editor:-

JOHN GUNN
15 LYNTON ROAD
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ICC members particularly welcome!

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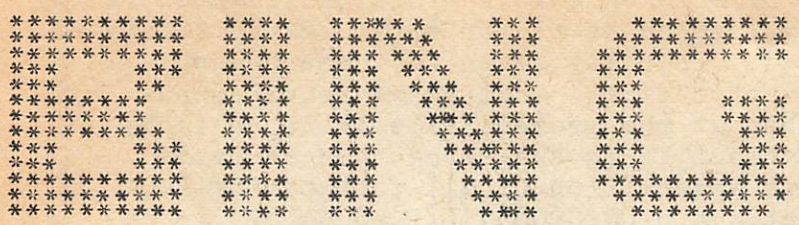
INTERNATIONAL CROSBY CIRCLE
presents



ISSUE 27

AUGUST 1972

E D I T O R I A L

YOURS SINCERELY

May I take this opportunity of sincerely thanking all those members who were kind enough to send their best wishes on the occasion of my recent marriage. Many of the cards which Susan and I received were enhanced by the addition of Crosby-orientated greetings, and worthy of special mention is the letter that we received from Bing. It read as follows:-

June 7, 1972

Dear John:

Just heard of your approaching nuptials,
and wanted to add my congratulations -
and warmest best wishes to you both for a
lifetime of happiness together -

As ever,

(signed) BING

Bing Crosby.

It may interest members to know that yours truly has now been a collector of Bing's records for approximately four years. I first joined the ICC in October 1967, and since then my collection of Crosbyana has increased considerably. Just recently, Susan and I celebrated the acquisition of my 200th Crosby LP by opening a bottle of champagne! Readers of my present series of articles in the "GUNN REPORT" will already be aware that my interest in vintage record collecting pre-dates my interest in Bing by almost 10 years, and many thousands of discs have passed through my collection in that space of time. Having studied the recordings made by many hundreds of vocalists from the 'Golden Era' of entertainment, it is my considered opinion that the vocal artistry of Bing is unmatched, and I feel proud to know that my editorship of "BING" has resulted in various communications from him, such as the fine letter which appears above.

THE CORAL ISSUES

The long-awaited Coral LP's of Bing were released here on Saturday, 1st July, and I have pleasure in publishing an excellent review of these discs by Bert Bishop, under the title of "Bishop's Bench". At the time of typing this editorial, it is a matter of five days until the official release in this country of Bing's new Daybreak album, "Bing 'n' Basie". By the time this issue reaches you, it is hoped that this LP will be available in all record shops. Official release date is 1st August.

THE A TO Z OF BING CROSBY

Since the publication of our recent project, a small number of discrepancies have come to our notice, relating to the actual title index. Should further errors be discovered, Bert Bishop and I will appreciate being notified of these, as it is Bert's intention to publish all findings in the next issue of "BING". It is hoped that everyone has found this to be an invaluable work of reference, and we shall be pleased to hear of your opinions and comments. A review of the "A TO Z" will be appearing in the next issue of the "GUNN REPORT". Details of this magazine can be found on the preceding page.

JOHN BASSETT

SPECIAL MEETING WITH BING CROSBY, LONDON, JULY 31st, 1972 by the EDITOR

A few hours after Bing's arrival in this country, before travelling on to Africa for another safari, the 'Old Groaner' held a special private meeting lasting 1 hour, 20 minutes in the lounge of his London hotel. Present at this meeting were Leslie Gaylor, Ralph Harding and two companions, and John and Susan Bassett. In a letter to Leslie Gaylor from Larry Crosby, it was disclosed that Bing would be arriving in London on Monday, July 31st for two days, but it was stressed that this information, together with the name of his hotel, should not be disclosed to the press or the television companies. Les honoured this request, and informed only your Editor and Ralph Harding, and as a result of which, the six of us gathered together in the hotel and were invited to await Bing's appearance in the lounge. Within a short space of time, we were greeted by the great man himself, looking very healthy under his rich tan. His agility of body and brightness of eyes immediately put one in mind of someone considerably younger than his 71 years. Sans wig and hat, Bing was dressed in a long-sleeved pale yellow shirt with a left-hand flap pocket, in the centre of which was the name "Bing" in black lettering; a wide navy blue tie; a casual jacket, basically grey in colour with vertical white flecks; cream-coloured crimplene trousers; yellow-and-white patterned socks and brown suede shoes. Les offered Bing his seat, and for the next 80 minutes we had the pleasure of studying, listening and talking to a living legend. The remainder of the group had been fortunate in meeting Bing on his previous visits to this country, but for Susan and myself this was our first opportunity of seeing Bing in person. The discussion centred around records, films and golf, and many interesting snippets of information came to light during this meeting. Bearing in mind the full life which Bing has led, it did not come as a surprise that he should find difficulty in recalling certain films and obscure recording sessions about which he was asked. Unfortunately, the strict rule of the hotel prevented any photographs from being taken, but Bing was pleased to autograph various records which most of us had brought along.

The next day, August 1st, the daily papers published some excellent photographs of Bing and Kathy arriving at London's Heathrow Airport, and the 'Daily Mail' had this to say....

> Bing Crosby arrived in London yesterday on the way to an African safari, and as usual Bob Hope was firmly fixed in his wisecracking sights. Bing was asked about two enormous trunks among his luggage - one of them decorated with stars and stripes. He explained that one was filled with camera equipment - film is the only thing that will be shot on the safari - and the other contained Mr.Hope. "It's so heavy because his pockets are filled with money", said the Old Groaner. It was later revealed that the second trunk in fact contained a tea-making machine and other bits and pieces aimed at making Bing, his wife Kathryn and 12-year-old daughter Mary Frances feel at home in deepest Africa. Mrs.Crosby said: "This is our eighth safari and we always stock up with jam and cookies in London. It's the best jam in the world".

Under the heading of "BING IN BLOOM", the following article appeared later in the week in the local press....

> Seems the size of the Isle of Wight came as a bit of a surprise to Bing Crosby. Not that he's been there yet but on passing through London the other day he learned that the island had not one, but several golf courses. It was Islander Leslie Gaylor, that most devoted Crosby fan, who told him. Leslie tells me that he visited Bing at his hotel this week and with a party of other fans spent over an hour with the Old Groaner.

Despite the necessary precautions taken, in order to keep Bing's hotel a secret (for obvious reasons), the BBC traced his whereabouts and recorded an interview with him, which was later broadcast on Radio-2 the following week. Further details of this interview can be found elsewhere in the magazine. To end on an amusing note, the 'Daily Mirror' published the following item in relation to the aforementioned interview....

> Nice gesture by Bing Crosby in London. A BBC commentator returned to the studios to find his tape was blank. Said Bing: "Don't worry - come back. We'll do the whole bit again".

CROSBY-ORIENTATED CARTOONS

by the EDITOR

At 6.25 p.m. on Tuesday evening, August 8th, a 'Bugs Bunny' cartoon was shown on ITV television, the story of which featured the characters of Bing Crosby, Al Jolson, Fred Astaire and Jack Benny. According to reports, the cartoon characters bore a clever resemblance to the real people, and the 'Bing' in the film was heard speaking and "boo-boo-boo"-ing. It is highly unlikely that Bing himself spoke on the soundtrack, and therefore we believe it to be a reasonably good impersonation. If any reader happened to be taping from the television at this precise moment, your editor will appreciate receiving a dubbing of this particular sequence, or of the entire cartoon (title unknown).

The subject of Bing being represented in cartoon form has arisen before, particularly in connection with MGM's "TOYLAND BROADCAST". The story of this early 'thirties black-and-white film evolves around a room full of toys who decide to stage their own radio broadcast. The toys who take part in this venture are likened, both facially and vocally, to popular artistes of the time, and among those we see represented in this film are Bing, the Boswell Sisters, the Mills Brothers and Paul Whiteman. The Jack-in-the-Box is supposed to be none other than Bing, who pops up at the appropriate time singing "boo-boo-boo" to part of a song being 'broadcast' by three dolls who resemble the Boswell Sisters. The soundtrack of the film is of poor quality, and the question has been raised: Did Bing and the other artistes actually assist in the making of this film? The general opinion is in the negative, but the film is worth owning purely for its high value as an early Crosby-orientated item. Heritage Films re-issued it a few years ago as an 8 mm home movie pack priced at six guineas.

GOOD NEWS VIA THE BBC

Leslie Gaylor informs us that he heard an announcement by disc-jockey Tony Brandon on his programme, August 10th, that pleased him very much. Tony opened the programme with "Gonna Build A Mountain" from the new "BING 'N' BASIE" album. When the record has finished, Tony made the statement that after playing "Sunrise, Sunset" from the same album on a previous show, the BBC telephone lines were 'red hot' with enquiries from listeners, asking for more details of the L.P. This is the kind of news we want to hear - well done, Bing!

USEFUL ADDRESSES FOR NEW MEMBERS

New ICC members might wish to drop a friendly line to Bing or John Scott Trotter, and so we have decided to publish their addresses:-
BING: 170 North Robertson Boulevard, Beverly Hills, California, 90211.
JOHN SCOTT TROTTER: 1314 North Hayworth Ave., Hollywood, Calif., 90046.

BING

by LESLIE GAYLOR

CROSBY

Once again, may I say how much I appreciated the last issue of "BING".... very interesting reading as usual.

"BING 'N' BASIE"

The news of this album has created more interest among the admirers of Bing and other people than any other release I can personally remember. When I received the lists from Larry Crosby at Easter, I felt very pleased indeed, and I had 60 copies run off by the 'xerox' machine process and circulated them to all sorts of people. They in turn certainly created some interest. Mike Nevard of the 'Sun' newspaper wrote and said that the news was 'fascinating', Teddy Johnson, the singer and Dee-Jay, commented that Bing was still 'supreme', Charlie Chester, popular British comedian and BBC personality, announced the existence of the album on his Radio-2 programme for me. So many famous people received a listing from me that it should help the album considerably, and one has to be very diplomatic in this. In a letter from Larry Crosby, he informs me that more albums from Bing are expected if "Bing 'n' Basie" sells as well as anticipated.

The following piece is extracted from the Hollywood 'Bible' - "Variety" magazine, dated Friday, 14th July. In his 'Record Roundup', Howard Lucraft writes:

> "Bing 'n' Basie" (Daybreak DR 2014). Interesting that Bing sounds better today to many than in his Paul Whiteman days over 40 years ago when his keys were about a third higher. He could be more adventurous range-wise back then. He used to feature "Old Man River" in D flat, going to a top F. On this new LP wisely tunes are mainly up-tempo. Crosby reportedly sang to tracks prerecorded by the Basie band. Sam Nestico's charts are swinging. Something should have been done about that final top D flat on "Put Your Hand In The Hand". Otherwise album is highly effective - simple with charm. The slower "Sugar, Don't You Know", by Louis Bellson, is a great new number.

PERSONAL EFFORTS

When the new LP is released here, I shall make my usual personal effort to get the record 'reviewed', or tracks played on the radio. As every single one of us is desirous of having more records from Bing, I hope that every member will help the new album along in their own way. Bing will only consider recording now providing it has a chance to sell. That's definite, so things are partly due to us to get cracking when the album is released.

Here is part of a letter to me from Robert B.Weiss of "Daybreak":-

> Your efforts in the promotion of the Bing Crosby LP will certainly be very welcome by 'Polydor' and 'Daybreak', and we urge you to ask all of your Crosby society members to do their best in making the BBC and the press as well aware of the record as you usually do. We do appreciate your efforts and meanwhile, our thanks.

As previously stated, Sonny Burke is Bing's very close friend. Remember that it was Sonny who produced many of Sinatra's recordings, and note also that he might well be concentrating on Bing now that Sinatra has possibly retired. Sonny Burke also produced Count Basie's LP "Have A Nice Day", released here last February, and which has been featured on

BBC radio by Alan Dell. Nice record, too. I've written to quite a few recording executives in my time about Bing, but never have I come across a man before who finds the time to send 'welcome replies'. I refer to Robert Weiss, the executive vice-president and general manager of Daybreak Records Inc.

He tells me that business is growing fast and his company have had to move to larger offices, situated at 6725 Sunset Boulevard, (Suite 504), Hollywood, California, 90028, USA. Mr.Weiss recently took a trip to Mexico on business connected with his company.

For the interest of our younger members, Sonny Burke of Daybreak Records is a life-long friend of Bing, and it was Sonny who chose many of Bing's records for release when he worked for Decca Records, USA.

"GOLF - MY SLICE OF LIFE"

A little while ago, I heard TV and Radio personality Ted Ray being interviewed on BBC radio about his new book, as titled above. Pride of place in the book is a report on the golf match played some 20 years ago when Ted Ray partnered singer Donald Peers, and had a game with Bing and Bob Hope....a most memorable event in Ted Ray's life. Ted has written to me to say that his book is published by W.H.Allen Ltd., 43 Essex Street, London, W.C.2, and priced at £1.55.

"BING" - BUT NOT THE BING

I listened with some glee to an announcement on BBC Radio Solent on Sunday, 18th June, that a dog answering to the name of "Bing" had strayed away from home, and the owner, a Mr.Pascoe, was greatly desirous of having his dog back. He put in an appeal to Radio Solvent to broadcast that his dog was lost. The announcer, Robin Worman, said that despite the dog's name, it didn't sing like Bing Crosby. There were a few other comments and I was highly amused!

"A TIME TO BE JOLLY"

Despite the fact that Christmas is some time away, I have suddenly found myself playing this album quite often. After a long career, I think that the 'Old Master' is in pretty good form on this disc, and I cannot agree with the collectors who say that Bing doesn't sing as well as he could in the 30's and 40's. Throughout his career, Bing has had his good and bad times, and the tracks on this album, in my opinion, are better than some of the discs he was making in the 40's for example. Larry Crosby says that the 'Boss' is still singing well, and I'll go along with that. Bing's famous deeper tones are just as good as they ever were....it's just that the tops of the high notes have been sliced off.

DISCOGRAPHICAL CORNER

For the interest of all members, and in answer to many queries, the following information will prove useful.

Title	RCA Serial nos.	Daybreak Master nos.	Recorded
A time to be jolly	AKB5-6255	DL100	16.11.70
And the bells rang	AKB5-6256	DL101	16.11.70
The first family of Christmas	AKB5-6257	DL102	16.11.70
When you trim your Christmas tree	AKB5-6258	DL105	16.11.70
Christmas is	AKB5-6259	DL181	7-8.9.71
A Christmas toast	AKB5-6260	DL182	7-8.9.71
I sing noel	AKB5-6263	DL183	7-8.9.71
The song of Christmas	AKB5-6261	DL184	7-8.9.71
Round and round the Christmas tree	AKB5-6262	DL185	7-8.9.71
Christmas is here to stay	AKB5-6264	DL186	7-8.9.71
An old fashioned Christmas (DEMO)	-	DL187	7-8.9.71

Master numbers DL181 to DL187 were 'over dubbed' by Bing. Orchestral tracks of Master numbers DL181 to DL187 were recorded 31.8.71 with Jack Halloran and the "Voices of Christmas" and orchestra conducted by Les Brown.

Bing's recording of "The White World Of Winter" was made on 20th September, 1965. Previous editions of the ICC's Mini-Discography have failed to show this date, but a fully revised and up-dated edition is planned in due course.

LETTERS FROM BING

The following interesting letters have been received recently from Bing.

Dear Leslie:

I do not recall doing the songs with Sinatra on the "High Society" set.

There is nothing to the rumor of recording an album with Hope.

I do not think a picture with Hope and Gleason will come off.

Your help on the Basie album is much appreciated. It is starting off well here. I have been a great fan of the band.

My schedule is about normal - maybe fifteen appearances of various types.

If I go to Nairobi it is likely I'll stop off in London.

Best to all,

(signed)BING

Bing Crosby.

Dear Leslie:

Thank you so much for sending me the copy of Ted Ray's recent book, "My Slice Of Life". I found it very well written, very enjoyable, and was particularly entertained by his description of the encounter at the Maidenhead Golf Course, when Hope and I played Ted and Donald Peers. That was quite an event.

I'm enclosing a little letter to Ted Ray which I'll thank you to forward on to him. I do not have his address.

Glad to hear that the "Bing and Basie" album is getting some plays over in England, as a result of your interest in my behalf.

I think there are some great arrangements in the album, and of course, the Basie Band, to me, is one of the finest. They've been together so long, they play almost like one man, when they are in an ensemble section.

I do appreciate all the other things that you do for my records over there, Leslie. You are certainly my prime representative in this field in the United Kingdom - if not in the world.

At the present, I don't have any plans for an album. There are some things that have been submitted to me, but they really don't sound like they could be successful, so I'm sort of standing by.

We do plan to be in England sometime around the end of July, first of August, on our way to Africa for another safari. We're going to go home by way of Munich for the Olympic Games. Possibly I'll see you on one of these times coming through London. I hope so.

Take care of yourself -

Always yours,

(signed) BING

BING'S LETTER TO TED RAY

Dear Ted:

Leslie Gaylor, my United Kingdom representative for recordings, social events, and general exploitation, has sent me a copy of your book, "Golf, My Slice Of Life".

It's a great little book, Ted, and I certainly enjoyed it very much, particularly was I entertained by your description of that chaotic scene at Maidenhead Golf Course, when Hope and I played with you and Donald Peers.

I'll never forget the sound of those slices and duck hooks, rattling off the balbriggans and the greatcoats of the spectators who refused to get out of the way.

I ought to do a book myself, about golf, but I lack the zeal. Sometime I'll get around to it, possibly.

Gaylor tells me also that you have been very kind to plug some of my discs on your radio show, and I want to thank you for this.

Hope you're flourishing, Ted -

Always your friend,

(signed) BING

Bing Crosby.

THEME SONG

Bing has been asked to record the song, "Marching Along Together" to be used as the theme for the Olympic Games in Munich.

SPECIAL LONDON MEETING

In this issue you will have read about the meeting which we had with Bing in his London hotel on July 31st. Bing was in good form on this occasion, despite being tired no doubt after his flight over. He looked pretty good, and I consider it was a wonderful thing for a man of such tremendous status to give us 1 hour, 20 minutes of his valuable time.

SNIPPETS FROM LARRY CROSBY

In a letter received recently from Larry Crosby, he states that they have sold Bing Crosby Productions. He goes on to say that Bing would consider a good film role, and that more albums are expected if the latest goes as big as anticipated.

For the benefit of new ICC members who have joined us with this issue of the magazine, the "BING 'N' BASIE" album contains the following tracks:-

Side One

Gentle On My Mind
Everything Is Beautiful
Gonna Build A Mountain
Sunrise, Sunset
Hangin' Loose
All His Children

(Total time: 17.54 minutes)

Side Two

Put Your Hand In The Hand
Snowbird
Little Green Apples
Sugar, Don't You Know
Have A Nice Day

(Total time: 15.51 minutes)

The track, "If I Had A Hammer" has been omitted from the US 'Daybreak' issue, and at the time of compiling this feature, it is unknown whether the UK issue will include this item. As with the Christmas album, "BING 'N' BASIE" will be marketed and distributed in this country by Polydor.

Regarding Bing's reference to certain songs with Sinatra (see the first letter), it has been recently claimed that Bing and Frank recorded at least three more duets for the film "High Society", but these were left out of the film and subsequently unissued on disc.

ANOTHER CHEQUE

Finally for this month, the following article recently appeared in the local press....

STAMP MONEY

Yet another cheque from BING CROSBY to LESLIE GAYLOR. It's for a hundred dollars "for stamp money" say the Crosbies, and that makes his fourth. Leslie, who lives at Medina Avenue, Isle of Wight, is a Bing fan. Indeed, he is a Bing addict. And the cheques aren't just cashed and spent. Bing sends them back after clearance, all autographed and ready to do duty as keepsakes.

"It's a great souvenir" says Leslie. "This is the fourth cheque I've had....three for a hundred dollars each and one for 25 dollars".

Why does the money come Leslie's way? The answer is that he keeps sending Bing and his office, newspaper cuttings and associated material. They gather it up and file it in America. The recent parcel to Bingland contained a copy of Ted Ray's autobiography, "Golf - a Slice of Life". This included a chapter referring to a match played between Bing, Bob Hope, Donald Peers and Ted Ray.

When he got the last cheque, Leslie said, "I'm so very happy, it's a tremendous gesture".

There speaks a true fan! And what's Leslie going to do with the money (about £40)? Need you ask....he's going to buy a record with part of it.

"It's a spare copy of Bing's latest, an album due out here in August entitled "Bing 'n' Basie", Leslie tells me.

AMERICAN CLUB CROSBY — The Crosby Reprint Series - Vol.1, No.1

Recently received by your Editor is a 24 page stapled set of photostats from the American Club Crosby, the Midwest Chapter. This is the first in the series of Crosby-orientated reprints, covering the major, important 'write-ups' that have appeared in the American press over the past years. This particular publication features articles from various US magazines, including "Time" Magazine, "Saturday Review" and "Sports Illustrated", the material covering the period between 1941 and 1958. Also included in this issue are photostats of various pages from the US version of the "Guinness Book Of Records", 1971 edition. The Crosby Reprint Series is copyrighted material and circulated on a limited basis to various worldwide Crosby clubs, including the International Crosby Circle. In this issue of "BING" we are pleased to include an extract reprinted from "Sports Illustrated", dated January 13th, 1958, and written by Joan Flynn Dreyspool.

"SPORTSMAN BING CROSBY"

On the dot of 11.a.m. one morning, Bing Crosby stood before an overhead microphone in the recording studio of RCA Victor. It was one of two four-hour sessions in which he was recording a Dixieland album of his own selection. Minus hat or hairpiece, he was comfortably dressed in gray-green slacks, a loose-fitting, long-sleeved yellow gabardine shirt which had "Bing" monogrammed on the pocket. His well-worn brown "chukker" shoes added a final informal note. A dozen or more pieces os sheet music were stacked on a stand in front of him. "Dream A Little Dream Of Me" was opened. "Let's run it over", Crosby said to the nine jazz musicians grouped around him. They had just tuned up when the studio door opened, and a photographer loaded down heavily with cameras and flashlight equipment entered. "Hi, Gene", Crosby said, "what you doin' here?"

"I'm supposed to take some pictures of you".

"Oh, no. Got no hair on, boy. Dad's got to paint some hair on".

The photographer had worked with Crosby before. He knew better than to argue.

"Tomorrow", Crosby conceded. "You can do it tomorrow. I'll wear a baseball cap".

The photographer exited as quickly as he entered. The red recording light went on and the door wasn't opened again for the next four hours.

"Let's go, Mattie". Crosby stuck his hands in his pockets and hitched up his trousers. When Matty Malneck's music started, the singer's left foot began to tap and the rhythm pulsed throughout his body. Every motion and muscle sensitized to the beat, he sang clearly, softly, distinctly. When he hit a low note, he bent his knees and depressed his body as if its lowered position helped to give the notes their deeper tones. "You ain't just dreamin', boy, you is awake", he drawled during a trumpet solo. The first take over, he sat wordlessly on a green-cushioned stool and, stony-faced, listened to the recording being played back.

"Did it sound all right, Bing?" the control-room engineer asked.

"Yah. Let's get on to the next one. It won't be too hooty, will it?" he questioned once. In his early days with Paul Whiteman and the Rhythm Boys and in radio, Crosby worked with the jazz greats; the late Dorsey brothers, Artie Shaw, Joe Venuti, Louis Armstrong, Jack Teagarden, Duke Ellington. The late, great cornetist Bix Beiderbecke, also a Whiteman alumnus, was once his roommate.

Another time, the ex-drummer in him asserted itself. "I think Nick's doin' too many ticks", he said. And to the drummer: "Not quite so ticky, Nick. Over the first chorus there, make it a little lighter, nice and frothy. What's next?" he'd ask. "Let's keep goin' while we're warm.... Go right along there, Sapphire", he said à la the Kingfish during a pause. If a phrase didn't sound right to him, he kept singing it over and over to himself until he got the feeling, inflection, phrasing he wanted. "It would've been better if I'd learned how to read", he told the pianist. Sometimes, between vocals, the spirit of the music was so much a part of him, hands in pockets, trousers hiked and whistling softly, that he would go into a shuffling soft-shoe, graceful, casual, content. "Everybody loves a vamp", he said during a lead-in.

"It gets you on and off", a musician said.

"It'd take a helluva vamp at that Hollywood Bowl to get you out there ....Man, you'd need a bicycle".

He ordered some food for the boys around 2 o'clock, and when it was delivered he kept right on, hamburger in hand, singing and chewing, never missing a beat. His eye ever on the clock, the sixth side was finished at five minutes to 3. "Thanks fellas", he said. He walked over to a chair where his brown Eisenhower-type jacket was draped; took a pipe and tobacco pouch from the pockets and, puffing on his pipe, went into the control room to decide which takes he wanted to print. On his return, he put on a brown felt hat and the jacket which proved to be about eight inches shorter than his yellow shirt. This sartorial error concerned him not at all!

(EDITOR's comment: The session described in this article should be easily recognised as being that of February 19th and 20th, 1957, on which he recorded the album "BING WITH A BEAT" accompanied by Bob Scobey's Frisco Jazz Band, with arrangements by Matty Matlock. The album was released on RCA-Victor RD-27032.)

THE TUSSAUDS SAGA continued....Bert Day informs us that Bing and Bob were both featured together on one stand in Madame Tussauds Waxworks, London, during the peak of the "Road" films, just after the second World War.

REVIEW OF THE CORAL ISSUES

Sit a spell.... more from the pen of BERT BISHOP

It was well over two years ago that CORAL RECORDS announced their intention of continuing with the re-issue of recorded material much along the same lines of ACE OF HEARTS LP's - both companies being a subsidiary of DECCA RECORDS. Even at that time their programme was expected to include Crosby recordings that had previously only existed on 78's.

Now two years is a long time to sit biting your nails in hopeful anticipation but at long last, three (of the later promised five) Bing CORAL releases are currently available. They have been processed electronically to give stereo effect and I can tell you that this first batch of 36 tracks is really something.

First, a quick look at the basic facts so that you can rush out and buy them, if you haven't done so already. Remember, they are on a budget label and retail at only 80p each!

CORAL CPS 79 "I LOVE YOU TRULY"
CPS 80 "BING CROSBY AND THE ANDREWS SISTERS, VOL.1"
CPS 81 "RHYTHM ON THE RANGE"

Let's pick up the first one. A beautiful sleeve; yellow surround with a large centrally placed cameo featuring a frock-coated Bing, hands outstretched, clasping those of Joan Bennett in a walled rose garden. This is a scene from the film "MISSISSIPPI" and was originally featured on song sheets relating to music from the film. The subtle shades and hues in the colouring of the sleeve is a delight to behold - how important presentation is. Having thus whetted the appetite let's turn the album over and read what delights await therein.

SIDE 1.	SIDE 2.
Let Me Call You Sweetheart (DLA 8-A)	The Folks Who Live On The Hill (DLA 940-A)
The Touch Of Your Lips (DLA 308-A)	Let Me Whisper I Love You (DLA 1276-A)
Lovely Lady (DLA 309-A)	Sweetheart Waltz (DLA 67-B)
Beyond Compare (DLA 552-A)	The Very Thought Of You (DLA 65-A)
I Love You Truly (DLA 6-B)	Too Marvellous For Words (DLA 738-B)
Just A-Wearyin' For You (DLA 7-B)	I Still Love to Kiss You Goodnight (DLA 941-A)

It will immediately be noted that by the inclusion of the matrices and take numbers that CORAL have issued these tracks primarily for the attraction of the collectors' market, although it is to be hoped that many one-time Bing fans who have fallen by the wayside will be tempted to purchase these LP's if only the record shops will make the effort to draw the public's attention to them.

It should also be noted that Geoff Milne who produced these albums and wrote the highly laudatory sleeve notes - bless his heart - has given us three different takes to those issued on the English BRUNSWICK 78's. This is a great boon to the collector whose shelves do not include issues on overseas labels and the like. The titles in question are: "I Love You Truly", from which comparison with the 78 reveals that 20 seconds of the

Georgie Stoll introduction has been omitted. Why, I have no idea. Maybe Geoff couldn't wait to get to the 'meat'! This, however, is not the substance of the difference between take-A and take-B; this latter take is positively identifiable by the inclusion of the word 'just' in a line in the second verse which here, on the LP, comes over as "Just by your side to stand". With take-B of "Just A-Wearyin' For You" the vocal differences are minimal and you will have to listen most carefully for the nuances in Bing's phrasing that do reveal the variance.

The third variant take that must plug many a gap in collectors' archives is take-B of "Too Marvellous For Words". Again the phrasing is only fractionally different, but you can spend a happy half-hour finding out for yourselves.

This album ranges from 1934 through to one track from 1938: "The Folks Who Live On The Hill"; I'm so pleased Geoff included this song, an all-time favourite. Notably absent are any recordings from 1935 on this LP. The prime reason for this must be that most of the eligible ones for this selection have already been issued on microgroove and are Bing's film songs which none of the included 12 are. I wish he could have included "Red Sails In The Sunset" and "On Treasure Island", but then, some people are never satisfied!

One final note on this album; Geoff states in his sleeve notes that not one of these recordings has appeared on microgroove before. Not exactly true; "Let Me Call You Sweetheart" is featured (same take) on the LONGINES 'free' record, LWS 349, that comes with the "BING CROSBY - TREASURY OF SONGS I LOVE" boxed album of six LP's. Since this is not an 'over the counter' LP, I think we can excuse Geoff for this small error.

Turning our attention to the second volume of songs, album CPS 80, the most significant point that must quicken the pulse of any true appreciator of Bing with the Andrews Sisters is the appendage of 'VOL.1' after the main title - an obvious promise of yet another harvest of harmonizing. Before listing the titles here on this first edition, a look at the sleeve produces a slight surprise. The main motif is the very same painting of Bing that was used for BING 14 in the BING'S HOLLYWOOD series of 15 discs. Fortunately there is a variation; the background is brown rather than blue and the three gals, Maxene, Patty and Laverne are well caricatured and set in montage, grouped behind Bing's shoulders; the title being formed in curved block shadow over Bing's straw boater. The whole effect sets the time and tempo well enough.

SIDE 1.
South America, Take It Away (L4178)
Quicksilver (L5215)
Forsaking All Others (L6044)
(Get Your Kicks On) Route 66 (L4177)
Good, Good, Good (L3877)
Don't Fence Me In (L3475)

SIDE 2.
Pistol Packin' Mama (L3197)
The Three Caballeros (L3476)
Have I Told You Lately That I Love You (L5216)
Sparrow In The Tree Top (L6045)
Black Ball Ferry Line (L6030)
Yodelling Ghost (L6031)

There are no alternate takes here; there were none presumably because all discographies list take-A only for all these tracks. One off only; a pretty remarkable achievement. However, we do get seven tracks that, as far as I am aware, have never been issued on microgroove before. Of the five that have, "Quicksilver" and "Have I Told You Lately That I Love You" have only appeared on an early 10" American DECCA LP - never made available in the UK. The remaining three, "South America, Take It Away", "Don't Fence Me In" and "Pistol Packin' Mama" constitute three of the four 'million sellers' (the fourth was "Jingle Bells") that Bing achieved with the Andrews Sisters. This out of an officially credited total (there must be more) of 22 Gold Record Award qualifiers. Quite a high percentage I feel, and the

reason is probably to be found in the fact that Bing was recording with this extremely popular trio, who had 'million sellers' in their own right, at just about the peak of his personal world-wide popularity, and, perhaps, when the potential record buying public were becoming more affluent.

From the 45 tracks that Bing laid down with the Andrews Sisters (including one with Dick Haymes) there now remains six that I can trace as being issued on 78 rpm only. If Geoff Milne could include this half-dozen in the projected VOL.2 - which would then include the rare "Hot Time In The Town Of Berlin" - it would indeed be game, set and match! Meanwhile, bend an ear to this present selection; you could do a lot worse.

Just to demonstrate Bing's versatility, as if any demonstration were needed, the third volume, CPS 81, moves away from the romantically sentimental and the up-tempo tunes for a roam among the range of cowboy songs that 'Bronco' Bing has recorded along with pardners 'Big John' Trotter, 'Small Fry' Young and 'Bob-Cat' Crosby. The album title is the same as a film that Bing made in 1936, although it features none of the songs from that film.

Once again, the sleeve photo' is taken from a song sheet, which may in turn have been a film still. It shows Bing in western garb leaning against a corral which in the original song sheet form was black and white. Here, on this LP sleeve, it is in colour, basically browns on white. For my own taste this one is just a bit garish. It seems rather remarkable that both the LP title and sleeve illustration relate to a film that has no connection with the songs on the record within; which are:

SIDE 1.	Sierra Sue (DLA 1970)	SIDE 2.	Ridin' Down The Canyon (DLA 2516)
	Whistling In The Wildwood (DLA 1757)		Prairieland Lullaby (DLA 2075)
	Along The Santa Fe Trail (DLA 2251)		Legend Of Old California (DLA 2072)
	Take Me Back To My Boots And Saddle (DLA 254)		Silver On The Sage (DLA 1314)
	Tumbling Tumbleweeds (DLA 1919)		San Antonio Rose (DLA 2274)
	You Are My Sunshine (DLA 2515)		Home On The Range (DLA 1778)

At least seven of these tracks we have had on microgroove previously but I believe that tracks 1, 2 and 3 on Side One and tracks 2 and 3 on Side Two get their first airing on this more modern medium. Five good numbers that we can now hear without the 78 surface noise and with the added dimension of 'stereo' - if one cares for that echoed effect of the electronically processed form - I'm not too sure myself.

One interesting discographical situation arises concerning "San Antonio Rose". An appendage to the sleeve notes states that the orchestral passage (by Bob Crosby) has been edited out as it was felt to be out of character with the LP presentation, but what is not stated is the fact that, apparently, a repeat chorus by Bing is also missing. Which means that there is only one complete vocal run through, making this LP version 55 seconds shorter than the original recording. In point of fact this isn't a straight run through of the song with the last part chopped off; there has been some rather clever editing here - one situation where you <u>can't</u> see the join!

After many listenings I have come to the conclusion that Bing's rendition of the complete lyric was taken down to all but the last two lines, which were omitted. Then the last two lines of the repeat chorus, as is featured on the original 78 were substituted to give the proper 'drawn out' finish. Perhaps if we look at the last four lines I can make my point clearer.

Taken from the 'top': "....Broken song, empty words I know
Still live in my heart all alone
(cut here, substituting:)
Taken from the repeat chorus: For that moonlit pass by the Alamo
And rose, my rose of San Antone.

Up to the point where I believe the link up to have been made the two sets of lyrics, as sung, synchronise perfectly but it then falls fractionally out of synch. when he gets to the line "For that moonlit pass by the Alamo". In any case the fushion cannot occur at the commencement of those four lines since Bing leads into them with "Ohhh broken song...." second time around on the 78. All of which must be boggling your mind or making you saddle sore or something!

Well now, this LP along with the other two give a real shot in the arm to collectors everywhere and our thanks must go out to Geoff Milne and CORAL for these fine issues. Let's hope that they prove to be the commercial success that they deserve to be. If that be the case we could look forward to further issues of this nature - certainly there is plenty of material to draw from. I suggest that we all write to CORAL to express our appreciation and maybe offer a suggestion or two for further releases - those who don't ask don't get!

BERT BISHOP

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PRESS TALK ...a few Crosby-orientated items featured recently in the national press.

From The Daily Telegraph,
Thursday, June 8th:-

> Not everyone will know that the Derby winner is named after Roberto Clemente, star baseball player of THE PITTSBURGH PIRATES and hero of last year's world series. First Derby winner to be named after a living sportsman?
>
> ---
>
> For drama, it is difficuly to remmmber a race at Epsom to compare with the 1972 Derby....Roberto won by a whisker from an outsider and the excitement until the camera gave its decision equalled that caused by the very late switch of jockeys. Considering the supremacy of Piggot on the Epsom course, and the shade of doubt left by the recent tumble of Bill Williamson at Kempton, the decision to switch jockeys appears justified. Mr.John Galbreath, whose interest in THE PITTSBURGH PIRATES BASEBALL TEAM entitles him to an opinion on human fitness, made a harsh decision but a fair arrangement.....the owner pays equal amounts of the prize money to Piggot and Williamson.

From The Daily Telegraph Magazine,
No.402, July 14th:-

> Golf....a game which has enslaved premiers and poets, monarchs and Mormons, actors and admirals, singers and statesmen, pugilists and playwrights, capitalists and communists....the list of actors, comedians and singers from CROSBY to Connery who are devotees threatens to stretch out like Macbeth's line of phantom kings "to the crack of doom"....

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3,000 or 1,800? the familiar query

A new member asks why the press quote Bing's recording output as being over 3,000 titles, when in actual fact the true number is less than 2,000. This is because Bing, when asked to give some idea of how many recordings he has made, always includes the various songs he has 'recorded' for radio and television amongst the number of recordings made in a studio. When singing a song, whether it be for a show or for eventual release on a record, Bing rightfully regards this as a 'recording', hence the discrepancy.

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CROSBYANA

FREE advertising for members who wish to BUY, SELL or EXCHANGE items of Crosbyana

O F F E R S I N V I T E D

Offers invited for the following Brunswick LP's:- "HOME ON THE RANGE" LAT 8152, "DRIFTING AND DREAMING" LAT 8334, and Pye LP:- "PEPE" NPL28015 (back of sleeve disfigured by a dealer's rubber trade stamps). Otherwise all records N-. BERT BISHOP, "Tideway", Imperial Avenue, Maylandsea, Chelmsford, Essex.

Offers invited for a descriptive sheet of notes, issued by the National Film Theatre, on the showing of Bing's 1930 film, "KING OF JAZZ". Write to the Editor.

F O R S A L E

A number of nice condition Bing 78's that might help the collectors who are just starting. Nothing rare. List available from BERT DAY, 20 Abbotts Close, Alwyne Road, London, N.1. Please enclose a S.A.E.

W A N T E D

Brunswick LP:- "HOLIDAY IN EUROPE" LAT 8505. Please state price and condition. KEN MOORE, 116 Chickerell Road, Weymouth, Dorset.

UK albums, "THOROUGHLY MODERN BING" and "BING SINGS FOR CHILDREN". Prices and conditions, please, to NORMAN TOOGOOD, 91 Chiltern Green, Millbrook, Southampton, SO1 4BB.

Good prices paid for the following LP's:- "LES POUPEES DE PARIS" LOC-1090, "ANYTHING GOES" LAT 8118, "CLUB DURANT" LAT 8218, "THE THIRTIES" LAT 8368, "THE FORTIES" LAT 8369, "NEVER BE AFRAID - THE EMPEROR'S NEW CLOTHES" GLP 352, "AN AXE, AN APPLE AND A BUCKSKIN JACKET" A298:21, "JACK B.NIMBLE" A198:23. Also wanted:- Many 10" LP's. What have you? All records must be in a minimum of E+ condition. Write to the Editor.

"OH TELL ME WHY" on 45 or 78. Good price paid for a copy in Excellent condition only. Write to the Editor.

THE INTERNATIONAL CROSBY CIRCLE is always interested in Bing Crosby records surplus to your requirements. Please send your disposal lists to the Editor, stating clearly the conditions and prices required. No charge for advertising and no limitation on space.

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W A N T E D

The following Brunswick LP's are required in the best possible condition:- "BING'S HOLLYWOOD", numbers 9, 11 and 13, plus the LP "Merry Christmas" (LAT 8556). Price required, please, to JOHN EWENS, 36 Southview Drive, Upminster, Essex.

F O R E X C H A N G E

One mint-condition copy of the Longines Symphonette LP "Bing Crosby's All-Time Hit Parade" in exchange for the Reprise 45-single "Step To The Rear"/ "What Do We Do With The World". Please write to RICHARD MUIRHEAD, 172 Colinton Mains Drive, Edinburgh, Scotland, EH13 9BW.

C E L L U L O I D C R O S B Y

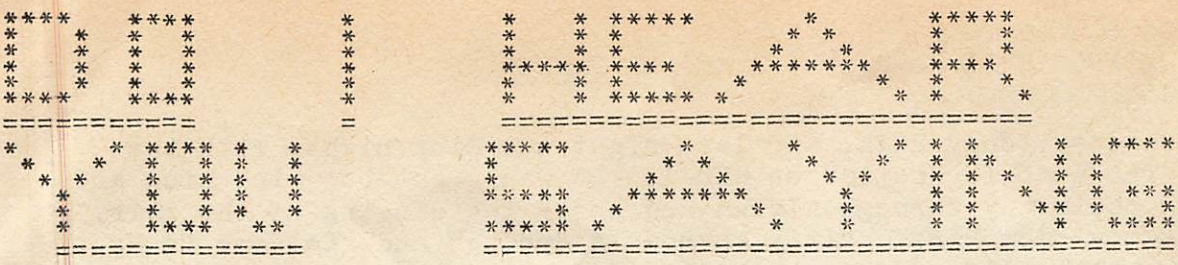
by KEITH PARKINSON

In the last issue I wrote about "RHYTHM ON THE RIVER", which was Bing's second "Rhythm" picture and probably the most popular one commercially. The 1936 "Rhythm On The Range" had a predictable plot and was not too well received critically, as we shall see later. In its favour, it had some memorable songs and for me, at any rate, its musical content was marginally better than "Rhythm On The River". As often happened during this period, Bing's Decca recordings of songs from his films were often excelled by his soundtrack versions, and in the case of "Rhythm On The Range" I have a strong preference for the soundtrack treatments in the case of all the songs. It may be that Bing achieved greater spontaneity with his vocalising for the film, but there is a greater 'feel' for the music than is apparent on the recording studio versions. Compare the two treatments of Johnny Mercer's "I'm An Old Cowhand" and even if the sight of the cast singing and clapping in the campfire scene is missing when listening to the soundtrack recording, the whole atmosphere still comes over, even though the Decca recording succeeds in being an infectiously happy recording.

The film is available for television screening in the USA, although in this country it may be one of Paramount's withdrawn items at the moment. In the 1972-73 edition of 'MOVIES ON T.V.', Steven H.Scheuer rates it only 'fair' and calls it a forced comic offering, whilst "Rhythm On The River" is said to be 'good'....a pleasant musical. Any film criticism is, of course, a matter of the critic's personal taste, but the musical content of "Rhythm On The Range" I rate highly, and even the non-Bing song "Mr.Paganini" sung in the film by Martha Raye, is an above-average offering. John Stringer once described Miss Raye's rowdy roughhouse style as a contrast to the Crosby cool. Bing and she certainly managed to brighten up the 1937 movie "Double Or Nothing" after making her film debut in "Rhythm On The Range". Way down in the cast list in this latter film is Louis Prima in an early and rare film appearance, and Bob Burns took time off from his bazooka and the "Kraft Music Hall" to play Bing's side-kick.

Bing was consistently successful with his Decca recordings of what may be loosely described as cowboy songs. For this reason, it is odd that Paramount did not elect to star him in another film which would provide the opportunity to showcase some western songs. In fact, it was not until the late 1960's that this studio offered him a part in another musical cowboy role. They wanted him for the part eventually played by Lee Marvin in "Paint Your Wagon". The film proves it to be a role well within Bing's acting and vocal capabilities of late, and it is to be regretted that the movie's lengthy shooting schedule made him turn down the part.

To round off this article is another critic's opinion of "Rhythm On The Range". It was written by Graham Greene at the time of the film's London opening. Greene was obviously disenchanted with the whole affair and I hesitate to suggest just what kind of a film would entertain him. Clearly, this review was not written at the time when the light American musical comedies



The title from one of Bing's 1928 recording sessions with Whiteman introduces our regular feature....THE EDITOR'S POSTBAG

NORMAN TOOGOOD (Southampton) writes: "I stopped, and I looked, and I listened. The sound seemed to come from the ground...." These words of one of the immortal George Robey's songs came to me the other day when I heard the voice of Bing coming from a hole in the ground! I stopped - because I just couldn't believe it....I thought I must be getting 'Bing-happy'. And I looked - and at the bottom of the deep-hole I saw a gentleman of the Electricity Board, busily engaged with a mass of wires, and by his side a little portable tape recorder. And I listened - to good old Bing singing "All In The Game". I walked on, feeling more than a little amazed, for the chap was but a young man who looked more like a Rolling Stones fan. It shows that one can never tell!

BILL WHITE (Brentwood, Essex) writes: I must congratulate you on the fine job you have made of "THE A TO Z OF BING CROSBY". I like the idea of the right-hand blank page. Anyone who owns a typewriter can take the book apart and type in all relevant details as regards their own collection. They can always use a ring binder, or better still, use an Acco clip. There's plenty of room in the spine to enable one to be used.

KEN CROSSLAND (Leeds) writes: I attempted to get a plug for Bing in 'The Sunday Times' recently, as having the most famous first name in the world. They claimed that the honour belonged to Groucho Marx. I wrote, claiming this title for Bing, but although my letter was 'read with interest', it wasn't published. Caught the portrait of Bing on Radio-4 the other day. I was a little disappointed - I felt there was too little Bing and too much talking by people who didn't really know too much about him, with the exception of Frank Murphy of course. Nevertheless, it was good to get on tape "Easter Parade" with Anne Shelton, and the 'fluff' of "We're A Couple Of Soldiers", both of which I didn't already possess.

RALPH HARDING (London) writes: What a wonderful morning and afternoon July 31st was to be sure, when the six of us met Bing in London recently. Especially good was that 80-minute session in the afternoon, when Bing was so amenable, so relaxed and so informative. And I guess there's not many Bing collectors who can say that they've heard Bing sing the opening verse of "The Lord's Prayer" - cold and 'off the cuff'. I'm very pleased that you met Bing, and I realise that for you it was the first time. Even though I've met Bing several times before, I still get a great kick out of each occasion. I'm also very pleased for you and your wife. I suppose in some small way it is a form of repayment for all the hard graft you do on your magazine. Believe me, you don't have to convince me of the work this sort of thing entails. (EDITOR's comment: Regarding the above reference to "The Lord's Prayer", during the course of the meeting, Ralph asked Bing if he could recall any recording session with Red Nichols, dating back to the early 'fifties, in which it was claimed that he'd sung "The Lord's Prayer". Bing was silent in thought for a moment, and then replied: "Do you mean, 'Our Father, which art in Heaven....'?", singing the verse in question in a deep husky voice! Ralph confirmed Bing's query, adding that it wouldn't be the sort of thing which Bing would be likely to forget. Bing continued: "Well, I may have sung it on radio a few times, but I don't think I ever made a record of it". Therefore, it appears that the session which a certain party in America claims took place between Bing and Red Nichols, is actually non-existant, and that recordings which are being offered for sale by this party are none other than fakes.)

BING TOPICS FROM HULL direct from ALF FARROW

Today is Wednesday, July 26th, and last night was Bing night, with the showing of "The Road To Utopia" on BBC-1. It was great to watch Bing and Bob clowning their way through Alaska and enjoy the singing of the pair, with a few solos from Bing. "It's Anybody's Spring" and "Welcome To My [illegible]" were smooth solos sung as only Bing can sing them. And, of course, the rollicking duets "Put It There, Pal" and "The Loneliest Man In Town" put over with the usual Crosby-Hope vocalising, and to me, the gags came as new and as funny as before when I had seen the film. I'll have to follow this series of Bob Hope films because they may show those which include the never-to-be-forgotten scenes in which Bing makes a surprise appearance!

Tonight is Bing night at Farrow's Pad and this showing of the film will come in for our usual discussion and comments with the emphasis on 'Let's hope we see more of Bing's films".

Two books we have come across recently have very good references to Bing. The first book is "LEW STONE - A CAREER IN MUSIC" by Kenith Trodd, and Bing is mentioned by Al Bowlly...."Bing Crosby is the only man who sings a song as it should be sung" says Al. "He sings from his heart, and lives what he sings". That was said in April 1933 and in September 1940 Al said that he had one favourite vocalists - Bing Crosby.

The other book, "NAME DROPPER" by Peter Hildreth, contains a very good article about Bing and throughout the book Bing is mentioned 14 times. Louis Armstrong says "Bing's voice has a mellow quality - it's like gold being poured out of a cup". And Bing himself says, "If I had to start again I'd be worried. I don't see how I could ever do it today. You have to be well managed and well exploited to get anywhere. But I'd sure try, because I love the business - I'd choose the same route but I'm not sure I'd arrive at the same destination". He continues, "If I have any ability as a song stylist or have made it musically, it's largely because of my association with Paul Whiteman's Orchestra".

I like that quote by Bing...."If I have any ability as a song stylist". What modesty! But typically Bing, eh?

I was watching Stewart Granger in "The Prisoner Of Zenda" and at the film's end, Granger (as the wounded visitor to Zenda) was talking to Granger (as the ill King in bed) and for three or four seconds above the dialogue of the two Grangers came the strains of Bing Crosby singing "White Christmas"! A case of crossed wires (my set is a piped television and sound set) but it made my night! Thought it deserved a mention here!

I've had several enquiries about lapel badges. One suggestion from Roy Chappell: Is it possible to have a badge similar in design to the badge on the tie? It's a thought and perhaps the ICC might give it some thought. I think that the support would be more than gratifying and I like the idea very much. Speaking of Roy Chappell, I telephoned him recently and when he answered the 'phone and discovered who was ringing him, he said "Bing is singing on the radio...just announced on the radio as the 'phone rang... he's singing "Thoroughly Modern Millie" - and I could just faintly hear it! Some months ago, Roy mentioned to me the possibility of charter flights to see Bing. I promised I would make a mention of it in my column, so if anyone is interested, Roy is the fellow to contact and I think he has something there. But the snag is Bing himself! - who knows where he is these days? The last time he was in this country, even the top 'spies' couldn't locate him!

I saw June McCloy in a recent showing of "The Marx Brothers Out West". Remember June in "Reaching For The Moon"? Great voice that lass had!

"Yorksport" provided a good little story about Bing and Bob some time ago. A Father Paddy Ryan was relating his golfing outings with famous people - golfers, politicians and film stars. He said, "Bob Hope is a better

golfer than Bing, but Bing is a better singer than Bob". No comment.

Johnny Mercer on Michael Parkinson's talk-show brought back nostalgic memories, and his mention of Bing (inevitable!) was made with a tone of voice that 'shouted out' the great esteem that Johnny has for Bing. I could have listened to him for hours, but we only had 20 minutes of him, full of wonderful memories of days gone by....but the tunes linger on! The largest chunk of the programme was taken up with a singer named Andy Williams??? No offence, Andy!

Last but not least, by any means, the CORAL releases! What a great job Geoff Milne has done for us, and I for one am very grateful for his hard work and effort to give us such excellent LP's. I wrote to CORAL thanking them and I hope that a few more of you did the same thing. They are really great, aren't they, Reg?

Well, enough of my ramblings for now....hope I haven't bored you!

ALF FARROW

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(EDITOR's comment: Alf's mention of a lapel badge sounds appealing, and I shall investigate the matter and bring the topic up again in the next issue. Incidentally....are you wearing the ICC club tie? If not, refer to this issue under the heading of "CROSBY SHOPPE" and send your 90 pence now.)

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(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 20)

C E L L U L O I D C R O S B Y

Offhand, I am not able to bring to mind a more savage critical assessment of a film and I have often wondered whether Greene felt that part of a respectable critic's job was to pan films which did not have personal appeal to that critic. Anyhow, here is Graham Greene's review, which I have edited only because it strays from the point from time to time:-

> "Bing Crosby as a cowboy; Bing Crosby crooning a prize bull to sleep on a freight car; Bing Crosby more and more like Walt Disney's Cock-Robin; it needs some stamina to be a film reviewer....Bing Crosby mournfully croons. That is the common idea of popular entertainment, a mild self-pity, something soothing, something gently amusing....for a popular response is not the sum of private excitements, but mass feeling, mass excitement, the Wembley roar, and it is the weakness of the Goldwyn Girls that they are as private an enjoyment as the art photos a business man may turn over in the secrecy of his study; The weakness of Bing Crosby's sentiment, the romantic nostalgia of "Empty Saddles", that is by nature a private emotion. Perhaps I ought to add that "Rhythm On The Range" is quite a tolerable picture with a few scenes which do deserve to be called popular cinema and an excellent new comedian, Mr.Bob Burns. I think one might even find a place, in one's ideal popular cinema, for Mr.Crosby. He represents permanent, if disagreeable, human characteristics of nostalgia and self-pity. I would have him bobbing about at the back of a scrimmage like a referee - or like an Elizabethan clown crooning his lugubrious reminders".

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* Due to pressure of space in this edition of "BING", your Editor has regrettably omitted a small number of interesting articles and a few readers' letters. This should not deter anyone from writing a piece for the magazine, as it is our intention to publish the 'over-matter' in the next edition, as will be our policy on other similar occasions. Particularly required for each and every issue are items of discographical interest to our members, or if you have a particular query, we shall do our best to answer it for you.
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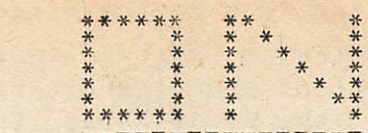

by BERT BISHOP

For those whom the traffic-jammed holiday roads hold no attraction, Spring Holiday Monday gave the opportunity to travel a much more rewarding road with Bing, Bob and Dottie. For on BBC-2 at 5 p.m. we were treated to another trip with that globe-trotting trio, this time to the land of the latins on the "ROAD TO RIO". Don't ask me how many times this has been screened - who cares - with a permutation of seven jaunts to the far flung outposts of civilization (not to mention outer space) it's a job to keep track of the repeats.

Personally, I consider that the second of the "ROAD" pictures was the best. Certainly it must rate as the greatest ever send-up of jungle adventure films. From thereon the 'roads' kept to the pattern and pace of "ROAD TO ZANZIBAR", following on in a kind of 'in joke' manner which would have you believe that they were made purely for the fun of it by Bing and Bob, with the cinema audience merely there to lend a sympathetic ear to an implored aside. Dottie rode along more or less in a bemused state is one is to believe her reminiscences of those halcyon days in Hollywood where for days on end she was caught in the middle of unscripted repartee and organised chaos on the Paramount lot....and I do believe her, I do indeed!

"ROAD TO RIO", the fifth in the series, made in 1948, featured the Andrews Sisters, the Wiere Brothers and Jerry Colonna, all playing themselves according to their fashion. Stringing along as the 'heavies' were Gale Sondegaard, Frank Faylen and Joseph Vitale.

The plot - vaguely discernable among the liberally scattered debris of humour that fell upon the eye and ear - concerns the antics of two itinerant musicians after being run out of Nebraska, Oklahoma, Texas and Louisiana by irate ranchers whose daughters sincerely believe they have been dallying with Frank Sinatra and Gene Autrey. Having inadvertantly wrecked a circus carnival in New Orleans they stow away on a Rio bound liner. Having avowed to eschew women, Bing, as Scat Sweeney and Bob, as Hot Lips Barton, are soon embroiled in the rescue of Lucia Maria de Andrade (Dorothy Lamour), an heiress, from the clutches of her deliciously wicked, hypnotising guardian (Gale Sondegaard) who, as is to be expected, is after Lucia's inheritance.

To attempt to unravel the story in its entirety would involve a complete issue of "BING"; suffice to record that the 'boys' inevitably save Lucia at the penultimate hour during which, from time to time, the 7th Cavalry (?), led by a sword brandishing Jerry Colonna, are also seen galloping to the rescue, alas, a little too late to gain any glory on this occasion:

COLONNA: "Well, whad'ya know, we never quite made it. Exciting though wasn't it?"

You see my problem! Never mind, along the way we had some delightful songs to relish. "Apalachicola FLA" duetted by Bing and Bob, interpolating "Swanee River" and "Carry Me Back To Old Virginny" as each extolled the virtues of the Southern States in their best Tennessee Williams accents. Bing crooning "But Beautiful" to Dottie at the rear of a deck cinema screen, and being caught out in a silhouetted embrace as the lights go up and the end of the film being shown. That profound little ditty "You Don't Have To Know The Language" gloriously harmonized by Bing and the Andrews Sisters in a ship-board cabaret. Dorothy Lamour for once handling more of a novelty number, "Experience", plus the general sound and beat of well-known Latin American music and song to firmly establish the locale. Great material.

In this, the second of the "ROAD" pictures, Bob 'gets the girl' - in fact, marries Lucia - but then, he did have Miss Sondegaard's hypnotic charm necklace with which to entice her away from his lovelorn sparring partner. Well, you've got to give the suckers a break sometime!

After John and Reg had both made mention in the May edition of "BING" of Ron Moody's excellent impression of Bing, I thought I'd better 'look in' on the programme, 'KOPYKATS', to see what was cookin'. In the event the final programme in a short series produced a thumbnail sketch of Bing and Barry Fitzgerald playing their priest roles in the film "GOING MY WAY".

'KOPYKATS' is an ATV production, and in this instance went out on Saturday, June 17th at 8 p.m. under the general heading of 'SATURDAY VARIETY'.

Rich Little, suitably garbed as Father 'Chuck' O'Malley complete with straw boater set at a rakish angle and lighting the inevitable pipe, was instantly recognisable as Bing, whilst that impressionist par excellence, Frank Gorshin, creased himself up into the diminutively obstinate figure of Father Fitzgibbon. They swapped a couple of gag lines appropriate to their roles.

It was but a fleeting impression - too short to thoroughly assess the capabilities of Rich Little in a sustained impersonation of Bing - nevertheless, the audience reaction certainly indicated their appreciation and obvious affection for the central characters from the film.

Notably, so far none of the impersonators in this programme have attempted to sing to create an impression of Mr.C. No doubt his casual mannerisms are easier to emulate!

Michael Parkinson, probably the most 'salty' TV interviewer currently in favour, certainly draws some notable personalities from a wide spectrum of public recognition to produce pungent programmes of stimulating scintillation. The latest line-up, on Saturday, July 15th was Benny Green - the 'working man's' creator of instant nostalgia and discerning criticism - Andy Williams and Johnny Mercer.

This latter character, the 62 year old composer, lyricist, actor and notable duettist with Bing ("Mister Meadowlark"; "Mr.Gallagher And Mr.Shean"; "On Behalf Of The Visiting Fireman"; "Small Fry"), was introduced via a medley of his music and song as recorded by Bing, Frank Sinatra and Andy Williams.

Mercer spoke of Bing's early influence on the style of singing that was to come. By way of illustration he gave his own impression of the way Paul Robeson sang "Ol' Man River", followed by Bing's interpretation of this traditionally 'darkie' lament. He spoke of the way that Bing had broken away from the straight approach to a ballad and had, much as a jazz musician interprets a tune, done the same thing vocally.

I'm only sorry that I didn't have my tape recorder going on this one. An interview that would have been well worth preserving in the archives.

Well, how about that; two "ROAD" films in one quarter! When I penned the piece about "....RIO" I was unaware of this forthcoming treat that BBC-1 presented on Tuesday, July 25th at 7.30 p.m. in a new series of feature films called 'LAUGH WITH HOPE' (sounds promising). The selectors of the films for these star series evidently felt it appropriate to commence with one featuring Bob's two most famous co-stars, and the middle-of-the-'Road' series to boot. For "ROAD TO UTOPIA" was the fourth of the seven committed to celluloid by our dauntless trio as they trekked their way across the face of the atlas.

Presented in 1946 this film, directed by Hal Walker (who was to direct the much later "ROAD TO BALI"), with screenplay by Norman Panama and Melvin Frank also featured the musical talents of Bing film veterans, Johnny Burke

and James Van Heusen. The cast line-up was as follows:

Duke Johnson.....Bing Crosby
Chester Hootan.....Bob Hope
Sal.....Dorothy Lamour
Kate.....Hillary Brooke
Ace Larson.....Douglass Dumbrille
Le Bec.....Jack La Rue
Sperry.....Robert Barrat
McGurk.....Nestor Paiva
Mr.Latimer.....Will Wright
Robert Benchley....Himself

Before even the famous Paramount Mountain comes up on the screen we are confronted by Robert Benchley who, after introducing himself, informs us that "this film was made to demonstrate how not to make a film and at the same time win an academy award" and that "someone at the front office" thought that an occasional word from him might help to clarify the plot, etc! So from time to time the action is stopped in mid-frame whilst an inset of Robert Benchley pops up in some corner of the screen to make some droll comment. From there we go into the credits and the overture.

The story commences with Chester and Sal as an elderly married couple, comfortably well off, 'though Chester a little senile despite which he is busy studying pin-up pics surreptitiously hidden behind a stock market paper. They are about to retire for the night when drifting in on the night air comes the lilting sound of the song "Sunday, Monday Or Always".

"Pa! Do you hear what I hear?" cries Sal. "That voice".

"What voice?" answers Chester.

"Listen, what does it sound like?"

"Who'd be selling fish at this hour?"

"After thirty-five years! Oh pop, you don't think..."

"Oh no, it couldn't be".

"But it is. I'd know it anywhere".

By now, the singer and Sal had reached the front door, each from their respective sides. She flings it open to reveal the long lamented Duke Johnson ("and I thought this was going to be an 'A' picture", digs Chester). Duke enters, immaculately dressed and accompanied by two pretty young damsels....nieces, he explains!

"Duke, tell us all about Alaska, we left you for dead. How in the world did you ever get away?" enquires the elated Sal.

"It's rather a long story, I wouldn't want to bore you", he replies.

"Hasn't ever stopped you before", interpolates Chester.

"Well, you remember when it all started, Chester and I were playing San Francisco", begins Duke.

"It was the turn of the century", muses Sal.

"Ah yes. There was gold in the Klondike and San Francisco was wide open", he continues.

"A million suckers just waiting to be clipped", chips in Chester.

"There was excitement and adventure", Duke responds.

"There was romance", sighs Sal.

"Oh yes, and one night, do you remember? There was murder!" Duke dramatically observes.

The film immediately 'flashes back'. Which device is carefully explained by Robert Benchley. We see a Mr.Latimer cold bloodedly shot down by killers Sperry and McGurk who steal a map of a gold mine that belongs to Sal's father. The dying Latimer implores Sal to seek out Ace Larson at Skagway in Alaska for help to retrieve the map after naming his murderers.

The scene switches to a dockland saloon where Duke and Chester are playing vaudville. They are doing a song and dance routine, "Goodtime Charlie", after which they pull one of their confidence tricks on some of the "million suckers". Unfortunately for them, Sperry and McGurk, who are being pursued by the police burst into the saloon and upset their act. Chester is discovered hiding under their 'Ghosto' gambling table switching the dollar bills that

the customers are staking. Forced once more to beat a hasty retreat, they eventually find themselves on board the same vessel as the villians much against the wishes of Chester who had intended to head for Brooklyn leaving Duke to the rigours of the North. After arguing as to which one should look after their money, Chester decides that the best place is in the safe, whereupon he goes to a porthole and stuffs it through the aperture! Their ill-gotten gains drift away on the waves. As a result they are forced to work their passage, scrubbing decks and stoking boilers, etc.

On board ship there is an amateur talent competition for ten dollars. Chester kids Duke into entering. He sings a song appropriate to their financial status, "It's Anybody's Spring", whilst Chester accompanies him on a rather wheezy concertina. Confident of winning they are somewhat dismayed when beaten by a performing monkey.

"Next time I bring Sinatra", is Chester's disgusted comment!

Meanwhile, Sal has arrived at Ace Larson's saloon in Skagway. She explains her mission to Ace who we soon discover intends to doublecross Sal and share the gold mine fortune with his lady friend Kate. However, he strings along Sal, even employing her at his saloon.

Chester and Duke find the map whilst cleaning up in Sperry and McGurk's cabin. They are caught in the act by the two heavies but manage to escape by literally pulling the rug from under them, for once eschewing their famous pat-a-cake routine. Having cut the beards from the trussed baddies they don their clothes, sticking their beards on their own 'physogs' thus being able to jump ship as the infamous Sperry and McGurk. News of the villians' latest murder has not reached Skagway but their reputation is well-known and as such Duke and Chester are afforded a healthy respect by the local inhabitants. Making their way to the "Golden Rail", Ace Larson's saloon, they find themselves being musically wooed by Sal as she sings "Experience", a song brimming with innuendos. Sal thinks that they are the real villians too, and invotes each in turn to her room to try to recover her father's map of the gold mine. However, with their usual mistrust of each other, Duke and Chester had torn the map in two, both retaining a half portion which they had hidden about their persons.

Sal, believing Chester to be Sperry, kids him along eventually getting around to quizzing him about his financial position. Chester is so carried away by Sal's willing charm - "As far as I'm concerned this picture's over right now", he says, turning to the cinema audience - that he spills the beans about the map of the gold mine, telling Sal that he'll ditch his partner once he's got the map off of him.

"Oh, he's got the map....where does he keep it?" asks Sal.

"I'm sorry, we don't tell anyone, we're no fools".

"Not even me?"

"Not even you".

"I hope it's in a safe place".

"In a safe place! Who'd ever think of looking in his hat?"

Apparantly unamazed by Chester's crass stupidity, Sal quickly brushes him off telling him she'll meet him later. "Midnight. My apartment".

Now she goes to work on Duke. Whilst he is pitching a little woo as the gruff McGurk he turns on the more sentimental charm, sits down at a piano, and croons "Welcome To My Dreams" to her. I'd like to say here that this soundtrack version is beautifully sung and in my opinion is superior to the commercially issued recording. During this musical interlude Le Bec sneaks the folded half of the map from Duke's hat, and, mission accomplished, she thinks, Sal also arranges to meet 'McGurk' at midnight. Ace Larson tells Sal to keep 'Sperry and McGurk' occupied for 48 hours whilst he, with Le Bec and Kate go to Dawson City to stake out the claim and draw up the necessary papers. Ohhh, the dirty double-crosser!

When midnight comes, the boys find that their twosome is a threesome and the date turns even more sour when the real Sperry and McGurk burst on the scene thirsting for their blood - and the map! Duke and Chester bid a hasty farewell to Sal, telling her that they have a date with a goldmine in Dawson

City. "Don't you have to have a map?" she cries. Both tell her that they have their own half and leave town at all possible speed on a dog sled but with no dog team. They elect to pull it themselves rather than face the killers and as they move off a large St.Bernard leaps on the sled! Chester had given it some candy earlier. By now a blizzard is blowing and neither Sal nor the two villians are able to find another dog sled to pursue them until morning.

The sun comes up on a sparkling snow covered panorama across which are travelling Duke and Chester, the large hound now pulling the sled, Chester steering, and guess who, riding comfortably cushioned and warmly covered by blankets!

"Well here we are off on another road", says Chester.

"Ahhho, and what a road. Case those trees, that snow, that scenery and that sky".

"Yeh, and get a load of that bread and butter", Chester replies. They look across to a vast snow covered mountain.

"Bread and butter! That's a mountain", expostulates Duke; but at that remark a halo of stars flicker on like a row of neon lights around the peak. The familiar Paramount introductory music accompanies Chester's vision.

"It may be a mountain to you, but it's braad and butter to me", is his riposte.

After a quick snene in which Sal is seen leaving Skagway in pursuit, the film switches back to the boys gliding merrily over the snow covered planes whence they go into their most famous duet, "Put It There, Pal". The lyric has an extra verse to the recorded release, which mentions a couple of their films, in Bing's case, "DIXIE", from which came his first song in this film. "We make a perfect pair, put it there", they sing. They sure do.

As they finish their song the music tinkles into "Jingle Bells" and the camera pans across to where a reindeer pulled sleigh is cutting a merry dash through the snow. At the reins is none other than 'Kris Kringle' - an alias that should be known to those who read Richard Muirhead's columns in this magazine.

"Look who's here - Santa Claus", cries Duke.

"Yeh! Say, there must be a department store around here", replies Chester.

"Well, well - Chester and Duke", exclaims the white bearded worthy. "Whoa, (to the reindeer) got your Christmas presents right here", he adds, indicating some bulging sacks.

"Ho, ho, on your way fatso, d'ya think we're gonna fall for that kid stuff", responds a disbelieving Duke.

"Do you mean you don't believe in Santa Claus?" frowns 'fatso'.

"Santa Claus! What'ya think we are, children?" adds Chester sarcastically.

"Very well. I'll just give them to somebody else", chuckles Santa as he drives off guffawing roundly. From the bulging sacks emerge two attractive 'dolls'; "You'll be sorry!" they assert in unison as Duke and Chester watch them swish away through the conifers. Too late the child-like tears that Duke and Chester sob!

Meanwhile, up in the mountains Ace Larson and Co. discover that they have only half a map. Le Bec wants to resort to violence to gain the other half but Larson has no wish to tangle with the Mounties unnecessarily. He decides to send Kate, whom the boys haven't met, to try and charm it from them, with Le Bec in reserve should she fail. They spot the boys coming up the trail that leads to a prospector's log cabin. Kate lays down in the snow by the trail, as if in a collapsed state.

"Hey, look, it's a dame!" cries Chester.

"Are you kidding? What would a dame be doing up here?" replies Duke.

"Well, it could be Sonja Henie", suggests Chester.

"Let me see her".

"Oh no, I found her. Kick around and find one for yourself".

Thus goes the verbal exchanges between them, but all is soon resolved for Sal arrives on the scene thereby making a cosy foursome. They retire to the log

cabin where Kate lets Sal in on the scheme to get the other half of the map, Sal ignorant of the true situation where she is concerned. She takes Chester for a walk in the woods to try to find out where he has the map-half hidden. They sit upon a snow covered bank where Sal proceeds to melt 'Sperry' as she thinks, with a song. However, it is the snow that melts with Chester sinking in a cloud of steam as he warms up to the lilting strains of "Would You" that Sal sings with provocative affection. All to no affect though; Chester is in no mood to talk maps.

Now it is Kate's turn. She tells Duke that Chester wants to steal his half of the map and make off with it. Duke is disbelieving at first, but she convinces him.

"You wouldn't say where his map is, would you?" prompts Kate.

"You're darn right I wouldn't", he answers, "It can stay in his undershirt until it rots".

Having similarly revealed its whereabouts in like manner to Chester it only remains for her to get it whilst Chester is asleep. In the meantime, Sal discovers exactly what is afoot and tells Duke that the map and the mine are really hers. He in turn tells her that he is not McGurk, and their suppressed love blossoms in an embrace.

Aware that Le Bec and Larson are waiting in the hills ready to do murder if Kate doesn't show up with the vital piece of paper, Sal is obliged to go through with the attempt to filch the map from Chester whilst he is asleep. The attempt fails at first when two grizzly bears wander through the cabin and curl up with Chester. He thinks it's Sal, and an amusing scene follows when the truth dawns!

After the bears leave and they all settle down again the girls take the map from Chester and leave them unknowlingly to those desperadoes, the real Sperry and McGurk, who once again have to give chase after the lads. This cliff-hanger suspense, which takes place among the crags and crevices of the snowbound mountain, results in an avalanche which sweeps the villians to their doom - Duke and Chester emerging unscathed!

Back at Skagway, Sal tries to reason with Larson but he is still out to get our heroes. He has the map, of course. They arrive back in town where a reception committee awaits them, Larson having put it around that as Sperry and McGurk they are wanted for murder. Still accompanied by the St.Bernard they overhear Sal explaining why she had gone along with Ace Larson's plan up in the mountain - to save their lives. They watch as Larson ties Sal up and puts the map in his safe which they decide to rob. Whilst they are about this business, the dog jumps in through the window with a stick of dynamite - they had thrown him a stick of wood - the fuse is ignited by a match that Chester is holding as light to rob the safe by, panic ensues! In a hectic imbroglio they disperse the 'hanging committee', rescue Sal and blow up the "Golden Rail" saloon as well as making good their escape. Larson thinks he has lost all, but Le Bec spots the trio leaving town again by a dog sled drawn by a proper team. An exciting chase ensues which ends when the dog team tumbles down an embankment, scattering the three of them in the snow. Duke and Chester stand arguing as to which way to run. Chester thinks they are going North and Duke is patiently trying to explain that since they are virtually at the North Pole there is no north, south, east or west. They all meet.

"There's no direction at the North Pole, an eight-year-old child knows that".

"Yeh, well next time come up here with an eight-year-old child".

"You'll do".

As they face each other arguing once more, the glacial ice begins to crack between them and a wide crevasse forms. Chester and Sal are on one side, Duke the other.

"Look out they're coming behind you", cries Sal frantically; pointing to Larson and his men bearing down on Duke.

"Come on, jump!" implores Chester, but the gap is now too wide.

"I can't make it. Look, here's the map", Duke throws it. "I'll hold them off as long as I can. You take care of Sal, she's yours now. So long

Sal".

"So long Duke", she tearfully answers.

"Boy, what a pal. Anything I can do for you? Any last request?" asks Chester, choked with emotion. The music swells and touches your heart.

"Yeh, when you get home will you look up my mother....give her my watch". He reaches in his pocket to get it but sees Chester already swinging it on its gold chain. The pathos of the moment is broken by this hiatus of humour. Duke turns to face his adversaries....

In a flash, we are back at the beginning, the aged trio united again. At my first viewing at the cinema this came as a jolt. The flashback ploy forgotten in the excitement of the story!

"What happened Duke, how did you get away?" enquires Sal.

"Simple enough; there were only fifteen of them. I picked them up one by one, knocked them out and tossed them in the chasm".

"Oh naturally", says Chester with heavy sarcasm.

"Well, Sal, how've you been all these years. How's he been treating you, hmm?" asks Duke.

"No complaints, Duke. Chester has been a devoted husband and a fine father", she tells him.

"Father! You . . s children?"

"One. A boy. Would you like to see him?" She calls out, "Junior". From an upper room appears 'junior'. Surprise, surprise. He looks just like Bing Crosby circa 1928! Chester turns to the cinema audience and shrugs off the implication.

"We adopted him!"

And there, my friends, another Road film finds its journey's end. I must have seen this one four or five times now, but having run through the story I finally get to know the plot! Maybe I should have tried this on "ROAD TO RIO" - but I fancy that would have taxed your patience too much.

As and when the rare radio revues come along, it is more than likely that they will be featured in this section of the magazine, so, Meet The World's Nicest Millionaire. For such was the sub-title of a BBC Radio-4 programme titled THE ENTERTAINERS which has two broadcasts of the same programme each week; Saturday at 10.10 p.m. and the repeat on Friday at 9.5 a.m., the show running for 40 minutes.

Naturally, the world's nicest millionaire turned out to be Bing Crosby, "the most relaxed and approachable of superstars"; so went the summary in 'RADIO TIMES' for Saturday 8th July. A small currently contemporary photograph accompanied the précis to the programme which went on to state that Bing was "more than the Bathroom Baritone par excellence" and that with the help of fellow-crooner Bill Scott-Coomber and former President of the International Crosby Circle, Frank Murphy, Frank Dixon would be presenting some unusual Crosbiana (sic) in this radio portrait. The producer of the programme was Herbert Smith with additional research by Audrey Kaye; the programme coming from Manchester.

This was obviously an event not to be missed and yours truly was carefully tuned in on time. After the initial introduction by the general announcer the opening bars of Bing's 1940 recording, "I Haven't Time To Be A Millionaire" with John Scott Trotter were interrupted by Frank Dixon explaining that we already knew Bing's signature tune, hence no "Where The Blue Of The Night", he wanted to let us meet the man. Despite the lyric that Bing goes on to sing, Frank Dixon continues that he may not have the time but he certainly has the money, "One of the largest and most astutely managed fortunes ever made from show business. So why can we still believe him when he sings about not having time to be a millionaire?" At this point, Billy Scott-Coomber came in with, "Perhaps he's too innocent to be interested or involved in Wall Street - bless his heart - because he is a natural entertainer".

Scott-Coomber was introduced as a pioneer of crooning in Britain before Bing brought that art to

America. Incidentally, a small photograph that I have of Billy shows him as a guitarist and singer with Jack Payne's Band and looking not unlike a young Bing. He reminisced about the days when he was playing the famous Paramount Theatre in New York when on one occasion the stage-door man came to him with a request from a Mr.Crosby who wished to see him. Although unknown to Billy he nevertheless asked for his visitor to be shown up to his dressing room. Bing came in and praised Scott-Coomber's act and went on to say that he was going to record a group of songs for his Irish-American audience and wished to include "With My Shillelagh Under My Arm" which Scott-Coomber had written and sung. Billy went on:

"He recorded that, and I'm very grateful, and my bank manager has been, for the royalties, because many and many a time it has bought me a packet of fags and a wee drop of the hard stuff....anyway, here's Bing singing "With Me Shillelagh Under Me Arm".

Well now, Bing didn't record this song until 1951 with the Matty Matlock Orchestra and The Mellowmen apart from which the composer credits are given to Wallace and O'Brien! At the end of Bing's first half of the recording, Billy Scott-Coomber butt in to say that Bing sang a wrong note in the fourteenth bar of the first verse, "Mind you, you were right the second time when you sang the second verse", he added magnanimously. Since Scott-Coomber was talking of very early years, circa 1929, one gets the distinct impression that there is a great deal of explaining to do in connection with that little excerpt.

This Irish song gave the opportunity for Frank Dixon to make mention of Bing's Irish ancestry on his mother's side and a general biography of Bing's parentage, upbringing and schooling, all of which was undoubtably culled from Bing's book "CALL ME LUCKY". It must have been the English version because they even got his birth-date wrong - May 30th. instead of May 2nd., and this wasn't even corrected on the following Friday as it had been in a previous biography - didn't anyone write in?

After running through the events which lead up to Bing's meeting with Paul Whiteman, Frank Dixon stood aside to let Whiteman relate his own version. Here again, Paul Whiteman drew on Bing's book, by his own admittance, to recount those early days. At this point they played "From Monday On", the February 13th 1928 version - (A41689 take-3) with Whiteman's orchestra and Rinker, Barris, Gaylord, Fulton and Young backing up Bing's solo spot. Whiteman closed with the remark:

"The older and more famous he got the smaller his head got and the bigger his heart...." An interview that was recorded way back in 1961.

Next on the agenda was an account of Bing's 'wild young days' which naturally included the unfortunate motor accident which he had whilst driving under the influence of alcohol. Prohibition days - jail! All this whilst involved in the filming of "THE KING OF JAZZ" which led him to lose the 'big number', "Song Of The Dawn", to John Boles. Just as well, I fancy!

From thereon to recordings with the Gus Arnheim Orchestra, 1931 and all that. They played "I Surrender Dear" and made a somewhat disparaging remark about the arrangement comparing it unfavourably with today's arrangements. But at least Dixon agreed it was beginning to sound like Bing.

More chunks of "CALL ME LUCKY" followed. His taming by, and marriage to, Dixie Lee and the steadying influence of his elder brother, Everett, "who took all the hard work out of being a millionaire", added Dixon. "Bing just had to relax and do his own thing". At this there followed Bing's Musical Autobiography recording of "Learn To Croon" cut with Buddy Cole in 1954 - just a quick verse, mind.

Frank Dixon reminded us that Bing had begun to lose his hair whilst still at school and has worn a hair-piece all his professional life and that on the screen, although 'getting the girl' was a mere formality "there has never been a less conventionally romantic idol". He advised us to watch out for the scene in the film "WE'RE NOT DRESSING", if it comes around again, where Bing loses his hair-piece in an unscripted manner during a scrap with Carole Lombard. Bing refused to shoot the scene again.

The idolatry of Bing was then introduced by Australian songstress, Pam Corrigan singing a musical tribute entitled "It Is Crosby, Who Else Could It Be", from a rare disc owned by Frank Murphy, ex-editor and President of the ICC (as most every reader knows about!). He was introduced as being "Britain's, and possibly the world's most devoted Bing Crosby fan". Whilst not wishing to detract from Frank's past hard work, devotion and affection for and on behalf of Bing, I rather fancy that there's a few other fellas that might well qualify for that description!

Frank Dixon related how the ICC was founded in 1950, "very probably in succession to other clubs which must have existed since the thirties". He went on. "At first it was known as the "British Bing Club"....in the mid-fifties it became the "British Crosby Society" and then...." At this point, Frank Murphy himself takes up the story.

"We changed the name again to the "International Crosby Circle" because by this time the interest in Bing was really becoming exceptionally tremendous as far as the Club activities were concerned. We were enrolling members all over the world; places like Poland even, Australia, which had a formidable Crosby following, Canada, America, Israel, we have members in Israel, and we felt that we could no longer be known as the "British Bing Club" or the "British Crosby Society" because we were so international. So we became the "International Crosby Circle" with Bing's blessing. He was so pleased about this, you know, when we wrote and asked him could we change the name, and he gave it his blessing and a letter of authority to do this".

"But how did you get involved in all this...." asks another voice, which suggests that all this was an earlier interview recorded with Frank.

"Yes, well, I was an active member, I might mention, I hope I don't sound too immodest here, but I was always writing off to places like a lot of other members were; getting Bing requests on the radio and letters in the musical papers at that time, you know, they were worth reading then (laughter from Frank - and rightly so!). Things like the "RECORD MIRROR" and the "MUSICAL EXPRESS" and papers like this were really worth reading because they had film news in (Frank is a cinema and Bingo Hall Manager) about Bing films and things at this time, and I just became active, I became Editor of the magazine which was a tremendous thing to do, we used to publish every month and it was full of record reviews and news of what Bing was doing. Bing himself sent letters over. We had an active interest with the Crosby Office, Bing's brother, Larry. We had ties with most of the record companies and because Bing was still a big seller at this time we had considerable support from companies like Decca."

Returning to Frank Dixon, the programme went off on to that thorny subject of the number of recordings that Bing has made. Dixon was quoting from the "GUINNESS BOOK OF RECORDS" and if only he had read precisely from the text therein he'd have got it right but he put a word or two in that made it sound as if Bing had recorded 2,600 separate singles plus 125 L.P.'s: "and you'll begin to understand why your particular favourite isn't in this programme", he deduced from perhaps what he believes to be true. In fact there are 1,822 commercially released recordings, which is what is being discussed here, at the most, and some of them aren't 'separate'. This includes the latest dozen or so on the "BING 'N' BASIE" L.P. plus the two 'first broadcast' songs that have now been commercially released on a US L.P.

Dixon continued: "You may also begin to wonder how all this recording got done by a man who spent over forty years telling us how lazy and happy-go-lucky he is. There certainly wasn't much leisure for his chief fan, Frank Murphy. My colleague, George House, went on to ask Frank to particularize about his devotion to Crosby".

"Well you know, it's such a wide thing. Apart from publishing a magazine we've got a tape circle which runs around the country. ("TAPE CROSBY"). There is letter-sponding. We had private records which we issued to members only. We had a photographic section of rare Bing photographs - negatives supplied by Larry Crosby, incidentally. I don't think you can put it down to time, it could be twenty-four hours a day if you wanted it to, but the thing was, you were enjoying this".

"The fans would have enjoyed it even more if Bing had only done a few personal appearance concerts in Britain", chipped in Frank Dixon. Frank Murphy goes on:

"This was a big disappointment to us; I hate to grumble about Bing because he is my idol, but I must say that we've never had the pleasure, like, say Sinatra fans or Tony Bennett fans, Jack Jones fans or Perry Como fans; we've never had the pleasure of seeing Bing very much, in the flesh, on stage. We've had the pleasure of talking to him on a number of occasions in person at golf matches and when he's been visiting England. It would have been a great thing, at say, the City Hall, Newcastle, or somewhere like this. Whether this will ever come about I don't know; I don't think it will now. But this was the big disappointment and I suppose it is an ambition which for most of us is going to remain unanswered".

Frank Dixon left our Frank here and went on to Bing's wartime appearances in Britain, referring specifically to the time when he strolled into a Soho night-club and made that well-known, to Crosbyphiles, off-the-cuff duet with Anne Shelton of "Easter Parade", a dub of which should be in every Bing collector's archives by now; it has been broadcast by the BBC a number of times in Bing biogs.

Percy Hoskins, the well-known radio journalist, added his meed of praise by recounting his experiences as Bing's general factotum whilst he was serving in the Army Radio Unit. During the latter part of the war, Bing had been giving a show at the Queensbury Club and had gone on to the "Stage Door Canteen" in Jermyn Street where at both places they were obliged to fight their way through thousands of people who had come to see Bing. From there they went to a Soho restaurant where outside, people had again flocked to see this great personality and entertainer. At the time, a 'doodle-bug' raid was in progress and the police became rather worried at the possibility of extensive casualties had one of the V.1's fallen in the vicinity. A Police Superintendent explained the situation to Bing who immediately went out on the balcony and said to the crowd, "If I sing one song will you go home?" "Yes", they shouted. "So with 'buzz-bombs' passing overhead Bing sang, ironically enough, "Pennies From Heaven", and as the last note died away the crowd silently melted into the night", Percy Hoskins recalled.

Mention now of Bing's relationship with Bob Hope, both in private life and on screen. Opportunity to play "Put It There, Pal". Dixon likened their dialogue to Gilbert and Sullivan, "except that they never throw a temperament". He went on to praise Bing's sense of timing and rapport and his happy relationship with all whom he worked with, including the backstage technicians and the musicians. To illustrate this point he played a considerable part of Bing's fluffed recording of "We're A Couple Of Soldiers, My Baby And Me" - a dubbing borrowed from Frank Murphy's collection. The band goes into the first few bars and to the bar where Bing should have come in, "Aww, wake up, wake up", says someone - and this is how Dixon explained the 'performance':

"There was a slight but uncharacteristic petulance there as he told the band to 'wake up, wake up', but the Crosby sense of humour triumphed over the Crosby proffessional when they began again. It took him just half a chorus to realise that this wasn't quite the most profound song he'd ever recorded", says Dixon. He played the fluff through to where Bing breaks into uncontrolled laughter. I think that most Crosby buffs will agree with me when I say that Dixon was either misinformed or missed the crux of this fluffed take by Bing. It is generally agreed that Bing failed to come in on the right bar and that the voice heard saying 'wake up, wake up' is that of band leader Lennie Hayton addressing Bing. Immediately prior to Bing's laughter outburst he had been singing much as he does on the commercial release, leaning dramatically into the lines which, admittedly, are extra-sentimental. There then comes a very obvious 'raspberry' from a member of the orchestra, whom we later establish to be, by inference, Eddie Lang, the guitarist. Had Dixon played this recording right through he would have heard Bing sing the final line as "We're a couple of nancies, uncle Salvi and me". I believe this has been reported elsewhere as "We're a couple of pansies" - not so. Any-

way, the 'Uncle Salvi' in question refers to Salvatore Massarro, alias Eddie Lang. No doubt Dixon had played this right through, but decided to twist the fluff to illustrate his point. It's a pity that the facts can't be presented as they really are.

Bing's modesty was readily acknowledged and amplified by Bill Scott-Coomber, and by an extract from an interview that he had once made with Eamonn Andrews concerning his golfing achievements during which he made totally unaffected reference to the games he had played with both Presidents, Eisenhower and Kennedy. This led into his association with so many personalities from Princess Grace to Louis Armstrong - time out to play a chorus or two of "Gone Fishin'".

Kathy Crosby was afforded expansively complimentary comments, and Frank Dixon drew on her book, "BING AND OTHER THINGS" for further information concerning 'the man'. In particular his financial interests in TV Productions, baseball teams, racehorses, banking, oil and a few others, estimated to total more than £30,000,000 in value. Dixon goes on:

"It tells too, of Bing's exceptionally generous benefactions to his own old school and University in Spokane, as well as to others. Above all, it underlines everything this programme has said about the basic kindness and self assurance of the man. I suppose he must be the world's most loved millionaire - he's certainly the world's most modest".

As Frank Dixon is delivering this short eulogy, Bing is heard whistling his signature tune which breaks off immediately Dixon finishes speaking, at which point the producer slipped in a clip from the Eamonn Andrews interview in which Bing says:

"I'm always trying, but, er, I can't say I accomplished too much".

A typical Crosby comment about himself in a programme which did, despite a few inaccuracies and slight distortions, put over quite adequately a concise biography of Bing. After all, we must remember that these programmes are aimed at the general public - not the converted!

The radio series 'THE ENTERTAINERS' came up with some more Crosbyana on the 5th August when Bob Hope was the celebrity. This time under Warren (Alf Garnett) Mitchell's microscope who scrutinized 'Rapid Robert's personality and career with an admiring but unaffected subjectivity. There were many welcome references to Bing both in the script and in 'excerpts' from films and appearances together. "...he's got a typical quip or joke about golf, Bing Crosby, Miss World, mini-skirts, to meet every situation".

In 1946 Bob and Judy Garland starred in a Royal Command Performance in London. The following cross-talk between them was an early recorded highlight:

"I know you're with Paramount but I'm making a musical for M.G.M. and I need a leading man. He must be good looking, tremendously talented, have loads of appeal to women, so naturally I came to see you".

"Well! Gee, thanks".

"I felt sure you could recommend somebody (laughter). The choice for my next lead has narrowed down to two men - Bing Crosby and Frank Sinatra".

"Well, go on, so far you've only got a man and a half; and I'm not sure which is the half ....take me for your leading man, forget about breathless and hairless".

Later, Bing and Frank joined Bob and Judy on stage. "Whew! What a line up", observed Warren Mitchell with well-founded enthusiasm; but we were not to hear any more of this memorable occasion.

Mitchell remarked that Bob had made 65 films, "seven with Bing....the best and most remembered". This comment was followed by a sound-track excerpt from "ROAD TO RIO" featuring the three main stars. And later: "To prove they are good friends, in 1961 they set up house together (Cranbourne Court, near Windsor) to make "ROAD TO HONG KONG". This was also followed by a scene from the film; the hilarious sequence involving Peter Sellers as the Indian doctor. Sellers went on to add his tribute to both artistes. The programme virtually ended with Bing and Bob singing "Team Work", also from that film. But during the 45 minutes Ted Ray related the story of the famous golf match that he "experienced" in 1952 when he part-

nered Donald Peers against Bing and Bob in a Sunday charity match.

"....I went out there hoping we'd have a nice pleasant day; but to my amazement about 10,000 other people turned up! Some of these people were in such dangerous positions....Bing Crosby was very concerned, he was almost white with fear that somebody would get a clout with a ball".

They were only able to play 11 holes because of the crowd. From the 11th they proceeded by car: "...they put the two great men inside and Donald and I were clinging on the wings like a couple of wing-mirrors terrified out of our lives for this 'rodeo' journey ....at the 18th tee - we were all-square at the time - Donald got a lovely ball and we won the game by one hole. It was a most memorable day....but there was a little sequal to this. Just as we were leaving for Korea (to entertain the troops) a kid came rushing into the airport lounge with a telegram from Bob Hope, it said: "BING AND I CHALLENGE YOU TO A RETURN GAME IN HOLLYWOOD WITH JUST A FEW OF YOUR RELATIVES PRESENT NEXT TIME PLEASE"."

One week later it was Mary Martin's turn for the tributes in this same programme. David Wilmott being the narrator. Her story centered mainly around her fabulous stage successes, "SOUTH PACIFIC", "THE SOUND OF MUSIC", "HELLO DOLLY" and the like. In a personal interview she confessed that she never enjoyed film-making and "...found them dull and utterly boring". Starring as she did in eight films for Paramount, two with Bing were mentioned; "THE BIRTH OF THE BLUES" and "STAR SPANGLED RHYTHM", although the latter was more of a guest rather than a starring role, it being that type of film.

However, David Wilmott chose to end the proceedings thus: "Mary Martin has always been, and wanted to be, a star of the stage. But there was an occasion, during the unhappy times, which produced a moment of pure gaiety. It will close this programme perfectly. Listen to this duet with Bing Crosby from "THE BIRTH OF THE BLUES". The duet was, as you may have guessed, "Wait Till The Sun Shines, Nellie", and being the sound-track version made a most welcome conclusion.

Having missed out on Bing's interview in Brian Cullingford's programme, "AFTER SEVEN", on Monday 7th August BBC Radio-2, I had one of those rare flashes of inspiration which prompted me to tune into "PICK OF THE WEEK" on Friday 11th. - selections by Nancy Wise and presentation by John Ellison. Joy of joys, I managed to add the following extract to the collection:

"There's a little story leading into the next famous voice, that of Bing Crosby. Now it seems that when Radio-2 programme, "AFTER SEVEN", detailed their reporter, Charles Thompson, to get in touch with Mr.Crosby, he did so with great enthusiasm. Mr.Crosby agreed to be interviewed when he was in London recently and so the interview was duely recorded, but, on the way back to the studio, delighted with his coup, something happened to the tape recorder and alas, alas, there was no interview with Mr.Crosby on the tape after all! Well, nothing daunted, Charles Thompson again got in touch with Bing, and he told him, the nice fellow that he is, he agreed to do it all over again. And the punch line to all this; the only other interview the reporter has ever lost was a similar sort of disaster with Bob Hope! So it seems appropriate that he began the interview by asking: "What about the rapporte that you've had around the world, because whereever you two seem to go, there's always a quip from one of you about the other, even though you might be thousands of miles away".

"Well, people ask me (replied Bing) every place I go, I'll be in a crowd, going into an airport, going to a football match or a baseball match or whatever, and they'll say "Hi, Bing", or sump'n, "Where's Hope, what did you do with the 'old man'?" or something like that. But I only probably ever respond with maybe one or two wisecracks, but if they ask Hope "Where's Bing?" he does about ten minutes - if he can get anybody to stand still that long, well, he goes on and on and on; he's got a regular routine he does!"

This piece was immediately followed by, the now inevitable, "Put It There,Pal", and the com-

ment, "A touch of the Hope and Crosbys taken from Monday evening's edition of "AFTER SEVEN" broadcast on Radio-2". I have no idea whether the 'tale of the blank recording' formed part of the Monday broadcast, so I implore anyone who has a dubbing of that event to get in touch with me, please!

BERT BISHOP

COVER VERSIONS

by KEN CROSSLAND

The subject of the sleeves of Bing's albums was mentioned in the last issue, particularly in Tony Bulmer's letter, which prompted me to conduct a deep examination of the covers which I possess.

Probably the appropriate place to begin is with the most recent covers to appear, namely the long-awaited Corals. My personal opinion is that we have here three of the finest covers of currently available Crosby discs. The Andrews Sisters LP has the same sketch that appeared on BING 14, but my own favourite is the "I LOVE YOU TRULY" sleeve - a marvellous picture with a beautiful 'frame', which sets the scene perfectly for the romantic mood of the album. The records seem to be selling like 'hot cakes' in their first week of issue, here in Leeds, and the contribution these sleeves have made to sales must be substantial, to say the least.

Some of the albums over the last few years have, however, been lacking in 'sleeve appeal'. The two CBS double albums, although containing interesting pictures of the youthful Mr.C., lacked the colour which attracts attention rather better than the somewhat drab black and white. The Christmas record last year was very seasonally flavoured, but I was disappointed to see the same picture of Bing which had been used on "THOROUGHLY MODERN BING", although I'm not a great admirer of this sleeve either, as it seems to show Bing as rather lined and aged, which, just or not, has only 'instant nostalgia' appeal, and obviously does not fit an album so titled. A far better type of full cover picture is to be found on the WRC "BING SINGS WHILST BREGMAN SWINGS".

You'll notice that I omit "HEY JUDE", well this album has a very fine portrait of Bing, one of the best of many drawings to be found on Bing LP's. Incidentally, I have a tape of a 'Hollywood Palace' show shortly after the release of this fine album. Bing describes this cover as 'the family version', and jokingly adds that the south of France release shows him seductively clad in a swim-suit.

It's astonishing to reflect on how many of Bing's albums contain sketches of him on the sleeve. For example, the entire "BING'S HOLLYWOOD" series was in this fashion. Since then we have had sketches on "THAT TRAVELLING TWO BEAT", "THE COUNTRY HITS", which I regard as a very appealing sleeve, and a very good likeness in the sketch; "ON THE HAPPY SIDE" (Warner Brothers) ...a very poor drawing; and probably the worst of all, the MFP "BING CROSBY" album. The more unsuccessful of these sleeves can't have helped sales very much, but many of the "BING'S HOLLYWOOD" were interesting and attractive.

Probably the best sleeves for sales are those which are out of the ordinary. There are many of these among Bing's many albums, for example the AUTOBIOGRAPHY records, with the pictures of everything one associates with Bing. Perhaps a small corner picture of Bing in the style of "RETURN TO PARADISE ISLANDS" would have set them off, but nevertheless, they are very good. "BING AND THE DIXIELAND BANDS" was in similar vein. The Brunswick "HOME ON THE RANGE" LP was a fine portrayal of Bing cowboy style, and not unlike the new "RHYTHM ON THE RANGE" album.

Hopefully, future Corals and new releases will bring us some attractive covers. In Spain I remember seeing the "IN A LITTLE SPANISH TOWN" album, which unfortunately I didn't buy, with a superb cover picture of a trilby-clad Bing of recent origin. Let's hope this emerges over here. The new Corals have brought us some fine records and fine covers. Here's hoping the trend will continue.

(EDITOR's comment: Write in and tell us your favourite sleeve....and why.)

THE MUIRHEAD REPORT

Quarterly report from
RICHARD MUIRHEAD in Scotland

The Crosby scene this month has proved to be most fruitful. It seems that now and again we are treated to a sudden and indeed welcome abundance of Crosbyana. July has been thus. The appearance of "BING AND THE ANDREWS SISTERS" Vol.1 was most gratifying. I found this LP excellent - my particular favourite being "Black Ball Ferry Line". The liner notes from Geoff Milne were very readable and accurate! It is pleasing to read that further volumes of this series are imminent. I only hope that the sales of the former prove high enough to merit this. It is interesting to note that once again, a previous cover of a Bing disc has been duplicated, in part on this occasion. The sketch being previously used on issue 14 in the "BING'S HOLLYWOOD" series.

I recently came across a paperback book which no Crosby enthusiast should be without - "THE 1972-3 MOVIES ON T.V." This lists, with a synopsis of the story and a review of the particular picture, all of the American television companies' copyright held films. Needless to say, Bing is featured extensively. I quote the section headed "COUNTRY GIRL"....

> "Bing Crosby, Grace Kelly, William Holden. Superlative performances in a dynamic drama about a performer wallowing in self-pity who has a chance to make a come-back. Kelly won the Oscar for her portrayal but Crosby is no less effective, gives the acting effort of his long career. Fine film.****" (i.e.- excellent)

This hive of information is published by 'Bantam Books' at only 50p.

I noticed the following in the Scottish Sunday Express, dated Sunday, July 23rd. I quote:

> Bing may play in Scots Tourney
> Bing Crosby hopes to compete for his own trophy in a new tournament for the over-60's to be played at St.Andrews on September 15th. Captain Gus Kenrick, secretary of St. Andrews Golf Club has received a 2,000 dollars cheque from the singer to pay for the trophy with about £500 left over to endow the tournament in perpetuity. The competition is open to members of golf clubs in St.Andrews aged 60 and over. Said Mr.Kenrick, "Both St.Andrews Golf Club and the New Golf Club have large country memberships. This means that members living in Glasgow and Scotland will be able to play". "It also means that members of the R and A will be eligible and we have arranged the first competition during the R and A autumn meeting so that they will be able to take part." Bing Crosby is a member of the St.Andrews Golf Club and the R and A. He has said that he hopes to bring two friends over to play in the competition. Said Captain Kenrick, "In case they are not members of any local club, I have sent two sponsored application forms for the Club so that they can get the membership qualification."
> (Acknowledgement to the Sunday Express)

I certainly hope that Bing manages to get over for this engagement, as it will give some of us the chance to meet him in person. There is also word that he may call in at London, either via or on return from the Munich Olympics.... let's keep our fingers crossed!

I feel it is necessary to print here an honest acknowledgement to Bert Bishop and John Bassett for the fine job they did in compiling the "A to Z", which has proved, in its short release, to be indespensible. The work which goes into such a project is very exacting and a bid of thanks must be made. Well done! Well, that ends my column for another month....hey! - the next issue is the Christmas edition....it seems to come round so quickly!

FURTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE VINTAGE RECORD BAZAAR

This very popular venue for collectors of 78 rpm records will again be held in London later this year. The date is 30th September, and the admission price is likely to be about 25 pence. At the time of typing this issue, the time of opening is unknown, but play it safe by arriving there at 10 a.m. The Bazaar will again take place in St.Silas Hall, Penton Street, Islington, London, N.1. Hundreds of people will be there, including many well-known 'names' in the collecting world, including John Gunn, Pete Seago and yours truly! So why not make a day of it? Looking forward to seeing you there!

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J O L S O N O G R A P H Y has to be seen to be believed!

This superb book tells you everything there is to know about Jolson.... his films, his records, his life - all detailed in over 360 pages and shown in over 130 photographs. To Crosby collectors, this book is a "must", as it contains dozens of references to Bing, including full details of every known radio show featuring Bing and Al. The book is expensive, we will admit, but the information it includes represents years of research on behalf of the editor, the like of which has never been attained in any other field. A few copies of this superb book are still available, and full details will be made available by sending a S.A.E. to BARRIE ANDERTON, 14 RICHMOND WOOD ROAD, BOURNEMOUTH, HANTS. Barrie has a large number of Jolson 78s for sale, a list of which will be made available upon request. Please mention "BING" magazine when writing.

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And still on the subject of Jolson.....

THE INTERNATIONAL AL JOLSON SOCIETY was formed over 20 years ago following his death in October 1950. As the years pass by it grows in numbers and strength as more and more people come under the spell of the Jolson magic. It is a potent magic that is timeless and contemporary.
The English Branch is particularly active and each year in October our efforts culminate in our Annual General Meeting which affords a wonderful day of films and photographic and record displays, plus the chance to see many rare items of Jolson memorabilia belonging to members.
The JOLSON JOURNAL is published from Canada once a year and it consists of 60 pages plus many photographs and interesting articles. Membership costs £1.00 which covers three journals plus occasional news letters, etc. As a member of the society you will be able to obtain tapes and photographs at reasonable prices.
AL JOLSON and BING CROSBY, two of the finest entertainers the world has ever known, joined forces many times on radio with outstanding results, and many Jolson Society members also belong to the ICC. We would be happy to welcome you into membership of our Society and application should be made to the English Representative: GEOFF WARNE, 21 BLADINDON DRIVE, BEXLEY, KENT, DA5 3BS.

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IT'S CHRISTMAS TIME AGAIN

Issue 28 of "BING" will be our Christmas edition, normally published in November. However, this year it is intended to bring the magazine's appearance a little nearer to the festive season, thus members will be receiving their copy sometime in December. In keeping with the time of year, we wish to produce an issue that conjures up thoughts of snow, Christmas pudding, turkey, holly and carols....particularly sung by Bing! All contributors are invited to latch on to this theme, good 'n' loud, and we'll do our best this end to make things go with a swing. We hope to feature a special message to all members of the ICC from Bing himself, thus making this issue a really special event all round.

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THE REMAINDER OF THIS ISSUE HAS BEEN COMPILED AND TYPED BY OUR SECRETARY....

REG BRISTO

FROM THE SECRETARIAL CHAIR OFFERS HIS SURVEY OF AN INCREDIBLY ACTIVE CROSBY SCENE....

"C"-DAY !!! CAME AT LAST

BY which is meant that the long-awaited, long-promised albums from Decca on the Coral label have duly appeared.

"C"-Day - for Coral, of course - for me came on 1st July last. And to be precise, it was at 10.30 in the morning that my jaded eyes came to life! And how - as they say.

I will not venture a guess as to just how long it is since these projected reissues were first mentioned - must be two or three years? And contrary to what our readers may think, the Secretary of the ICC does not, regrettably, get any prior news or progress reports, from Decca. You may think this slightly surprising in view of the fact that the Decca executive who is responsible for most reissues does in fact read BING as our guest.

However, be that as it may (to coin another phrase) clearly things were hotting up. Various members wrote to tell me they had news that seemed more concrete. Then, if you please, a post-card from a NEW member, MARTIN CLEMENTS, of London, SW13, not only gave me the catalogue numbers but the finalised titles! This was about a week before they did appear.

Martin is "new" to the ICC but far from new to Crosby-collecting. More of this later, however.

Back to July 1st: I had decided to visit Cardiff just to look around the record shops. I do this not so much because the shops are better there - there are MORE of them! South Wales, in my experience, is not the first place on the distributing list for new records, so I'm more than delighted to say that not only did Cardiff at last redeem itself in this direction, it positively shone.

Cardiff is about 20 miles from Cwmbran so leaving home about 9.45 I was parked - and, yes, Cardiff is as bad as all other big cities in this direction - and ready to forage. The first shop I entered was City Radio...

Mind you, I had expected more letters, post-cards, perhaps telegrams, saying "THEY'RE IN THE SHOPS" when I would have set about the wearying task of TELLING these shops that new Crosby albums were available and would they please order them for me. Wearying and delaying, of course.

I blinked in disbelief: on July 1st, at 10.30am., there they were all prominently displayed in their georgeous covers! I whipped them out of the racks and had them on the counter for wrapping, surely, in record (no pun intended!) time. The assistant had the decency to look mildly surprised when she asked: "All three?".... "All ten!" I replied, "if only there WERE ten.....but I must make do with three. By the way, I'd

like to congratulate you on not only having these records in so early, but so prominently displayed!"

The assistant seemed highly delighted. "Oh, we usually get Bing's records in... they don't sell like hot-cakes but we always sell them..." Actually, this wasn't strictly true, but I refrained from spoiling a glowing morning! But I did remember to suggest that as I had cleared out their entire stock of the Corals they might re-order immediately. But this time the young lady won: "Oh, we have some more copies on the shelves," she said, "I'll put more in the browser right now..."

A highly satisfactory morning, well worth waiting for.

COLOURFUL SLEEVES:

One of my correspondents had suggested that one of the causes of the long hold-up in the release of these albums was, in fact, suitable covers, or sleeves. Well, here again, the waiting was worthwhile for in my opinion an equally splendid job has been done with the sleeves, for surely they are among the most attractive ever presented? Colourful, even startling. And highly appropriate to the type of music on the records.

"I LOVE YOU TRULY" has a suitably romantic appeal with what must be a photograph from Bing's film "Mississippi" - though I must confess, I do not remember Joan Bennett as a blonde! Still, wherever it comes from, it is a nice, romantic, picture to adorn a very romantic album. The cover for the Bing/Andrews Sisters is really start I feel. The gals look most glamorous and attractive, and Bing in his "boater", appears in most happy mood. The cover for RHYTHM ON THE RANGE is perhaps the most colourful, with a picture slightly reminiscent of that on the Brunswick album HOME ON THE RANGE but with more natural hues.

SLEEVE NOTES:

There are many remarkable things about this package - making it surely one of the most attractive ever offered Crosby admirers. Take the price of each album for a start - 90p! Thirty-six Crosby numbers for considerably less than what the original 78s cost at the time of issue! And less, too, than those USED 78s might cost you today - but more on the original 78s later on.

Take the sleeve notes: a virtuoso performance by Geoff. Milne, I feel. He has avoided all the Crosby-cliches so beloved of sleeve-writers in the past and found plenty new and refreshing to say. And, you will observe, Geoff. has provided the notes for all three albums.

But perhaps the most remarkable thing about these albums is the actual repertoire. So many of the titles are appearing for the very first time on microgroove recordings. All the "Crosby Classics" which have been issued and reissued interminably have been "rested" - tho' make no mistake, the numbers included are just as much Crosby Classics. Thus, these albums have an astonishing freshness about them, and they will be a tremendous boon to all of us, and especially to the newer, younger, collectors who must indeed fell themselves truly blessed! And, as Geoff. Milne points out, these songs are not Crosby-film songs either but illustrative of what Bing recorded of the changing hit-song parade through the years.

TO THE ACTUAL SOUND:

The actual sound! Oh my goodness! It so happened that shortly before getting these albums I had made another step forward in the quality of my equipment - I acquired a much better quality amplifier and deck to complement a not inexpensive pair of speakers I had bought a few months earlier. The march of progress! I put on first RHYTHM ON THE RANGE: "Sierra Sue"! And as it boomed out with that added "echo" and that re-created stereo I knew, I realised, I was hearing Bing as I'd never heard him before!

I blanched for the "purists" - who would go scurrying for their 78s - perhaps even the steel needles with which to play 'em! Unless I miss my guess, there will be plenty said about these "modernised" recordings. There are those who always maintain that the original 78s are better, have more body, are "rounder" than transcriptions to LP - they said that before "echo" and simulated "stereo" was introduced. What they will say to this I shudder to think!

But, its up to everyone to get what they can, what they WANT, out of Crosbyana. I'm not going to argue against the "purists" - they're entitled to their views and beliefs. For me, I think these albums are great. Mind you, I don't particularly like original recordings being mucked about with in the way of editing....but a little echo suits me and does not unduly offend my ear. The stereo effect, too, is not displeasing to my ear, either.

Oddly enough, though, the only number on the three records that has been edited is "San Antonio Rose" and I must confess this is an exception with which I must, conversely, concur. The Bob Crosby Band passage in the original number WOULD be rather out of character on a "country and Western" album. It also obviates the feeling one is liable to get when listening to the original 78 that Bing and Bob were caught on a roundabout with no exit from the recurring melody!

On receipt of these albums I cheerfully consign my 78s to the attic! I'll not dispose of them - certainly not destroy them! - but all the while these Corals are available I shan't be playing the 78s. Mind you, they're all on tape so I will be able to make the occasional comparison!

THE MURDEROUS STEEL NEEDLE:

I don't really think the diehard Crosbyites <u>really</u> go back to playing their records with thorns! But mention of them may mystify, if not intrigue, younger Crosby fans, so it may be as well to tell them that once upon a time, with a certain sound-box (!) and a certain type of record, one reproduced the necessary "vibrations" by using a thorn! A thorn instead of a needle, that is. What's that! What is a NEEDLE? Oh my goodness...

In the days before stylii and pick-ups and cartridges and the new-fangled hi-fi which today is fairly commonplace, gramophones - aye, and radiograms for that matter, employed a steel needle to run round the grooves of a record. Actually, of course, it is the other way about: the <u>record</u> ran around with a steel needle pressing on it. Yes indeed, a STEEL needle! It sounds the most vicious sabotage, doesn't it? How on earth could a shellac record withstand constant playings by this sadistic method?

Well, they certainly did - though one is entitled to ask: how long did a 78 rpm record stay "mint"? Yet it is safe to say that any Thirties or Forties 78 you pick up today in a sale, or in a junk-shop, has been subjected to barbarous treatment at the hands of a steel needle. You could buy them in little boxes of 200 or so at time - and they came in "Loud", "Medium" and "Soft" varieties! To 75 per cent of our members this is all elementary nostalgia, but it may come as a surprise to the other 25 per cent. It is miraculous, I feel, that so many old 78 records play as well as they do.

Well, I've digressed somewhat from discussing the Corals - except that most of the tracks on these albums come from the "steel needle era"! Thanks to these Corals we have virtually a new collection of Crosby records, sounding extraordinary modern while still comfortingly familiar. And my mail so far has indicated 100 per cent approbation for them. Yet, I've heard of a few disappointments!

One reader, for instance, wrote: "....I bought the 'I Love You Truly' album first and was disappointed, because I always remember 'The Folks Who Live On The Hill'

as a duet, sung with a girl vocalist - someone like Frances Langford. Yet this solo seems the only version in the mini-Discography, so I must be thinking of a film performance...."

Hmmm...no doubting this has always been a Bing solo - and as far as I know, never was sung in a film. At least, not in a Bing film. I can only think that my correspondent's memory has played him a trick. The only other possibility is, I suppose, that Bing did in fact duet with a female on this number on radio. But I don't know of it. Sounds the sort of number he could have sung with - Peggy Lee? But as I say, I doubt it, and no doubt someone will put us right.

And what of this: "....can you imagine having three new albums in your suitcase ..and eight more days to get home before you can hear them? It's torture!" Yes, I can well imagine the "torture"! But, let's have the full letter!

"BELFAST HAS BEEN A LITTLE HECTIC"

...and that, we must concede, is a modest understatement by any standards! But our good friend, RAYMOND McCORMACK, 44, Mountainview Park, Crumlin Road, Belfast saw it that way in an interesting letter:

"Firstly, many thanks for the A - Z of Bing. I hesitate to use the usual complimentary adjectives, so perhaps you'll understand my reaction if I say anyone who is at all familiar with Bing's repertoire can pick up this index and read it like a book - as well as for useful reference.

> "Apologies for not writing sooner but Belfast has been pretty hectic these past four weeks. No doubt you saw on the TV the awful day we had yesterday (Friday). I was caught up in it down town and, believe me, it was like an Audie Murphy war epic - only for real!

"To turn to more pleasant thoughts I've just returned from holidays in the Isle of Man and it was Heaven to be able to walk freely at any time and get undisturbed sleep, but to the main business! In a back street I wandered into a record shop and before my very eyes there they were - the three Coral albums the prospect of which has been wetting our palates for so long! My heart leapt - and then my hand. To my wallet, of course, just as if all Crosby fans were breathing down my neck to be in front of me, to forestall me.

"The shopkeeper, forsooth, saw fit to warn me that these were not new recordings - BUT ONLY 78s REISSUED...and I said. "Yes - just great, isn't it!" And, as a matter of interest, he agreed!

"I grabbed the first horsetram back to my hotel and devoured the covers and sleeve notes - and nearly missed my tea in the hotel on account of them. Geoff. Milne is certainly to be complimented on this occasion for what he has done for us Bing fans. You probably have these by now, and no doubt you agree that they are super.

"In the "cowboy songs' album I was particularly pleased to see 'San Antonio Rose' - a big favourite of mine, but second in fact to the terrific 'Sierra Sue'; what control Bing has of this song, particularly the opening lines. No doubt there will be a good deal of comment from readers of BING in respect of these three issue in the next publication....all the best for the future.... Raymond McCormack."

PS: .... and here again the anguished cri-de-coeur quoted above about waiting eight

days with the Corals in Ray's suitcase before he could return home and play 'em!

> Actually, I do happen to know how Ray felt, for when I was abroad on a three-year tour-of-duty, towards the end my family, furniture, effects - AND RADIOGRAM - were returned to the UK. This was about 5 months before I myself was due back: during that five months I picked up the albums "HOME ON THE RANGE", "IN A LITTLE SPANISH TOWN", and the singles of Gigi/Next Time It Happens and Church Bells/Rain. They burned a hole in my patience, leave alone my suitcase!

FIRST RUMBLINGS!

I "predicted" above that some of the purists would look askance at some of the echo &c. with these 3 albums....it wasn't long in coming! I received a momentous letter from Michael Crampton in Leeds (and more about THIS later!) but one of his paragraphs read:

> "THE CORALS ARE A REAL TREAT, AND MY ONLY COMPLAINT IS ABOUT THE NEED TO INTRODUCE THE ECHO EFFECT. DO YOU SHARE THIS VIEW?"

Well now, I've never disagreed with young Michael yet on Crosbyana - so how do I get out of this one? I don't DISLIKE the echo effect: it seems to up-date Bing without materially changing him. At the same time, I don't think his records really need it. But, overall, I don't find it unacceptable. I reckon that diplomatic reply entitles me to a job in the Foreign Office.

It might well be argued that no-one listens to Crosby records these days with more discernment, if not criticism, than FRED REYNOLDS, in Birmingham. I asked Fred his views of the Corals:

> "My impression is that although there is some noticeable"echo" ...(a little too much for my liking here and there) they are very welcome and, on the whole, very well transferred".

Fred, I was sorry to hear, added a rather disconcerting note. He had, it seems, listened to the albums only once; "the reason is that I obtained them just before going into hospital for an operation on my leg. I have now returned home but am still feeling the after-effects. The leg is healing okay but unfortunately I was put on some anti-biotic tablets which made me feel very ill and I'm only just beginning to feel a little better..."

Let's hope Fred is fully recovered by the time this is in print - he will get the best wishes of all of us.

So, despite the "echo" reaction from high quarters is favourable - very favourable.

A PROMOTIONAL IDEA !

Barry Adams weighed in from Belfast - yes another peace-loving Crosby admirer from that tortmented city, proving the TV and newspapers show us only the evils:

"The Corals are just 'Too Marvellous for Words'. I would, in fact, like to see Geoff. Milne in the Birthday Honours List! Seriously though, I pray that the sales of these LPs are good, otherwise we had better forget about any more material being made available. Look at it this way: Decca has put some of the best Crosby recordings onto the market at a give-away price of 99p each. If THESE don't sell than Decca will come to the conclusion that Bing Crosby is no longer a commercial proposition. I have a suggestion to make to all Crosby

collectors who subscribe to BING. It is as follows:

(a) Buy one copy of each LP for themselves - naturally!

(b) Approach three different people with the following proposition: "There are 3 new Bing LPs on the market at the give-away price of 99p each. The records represent Bing Crosby at his best - and I am willing to buy these records and sell them to you for the ridiculous price of £2."

I have already done this and I am personally responsible for the sale of 12 records at an all in price of about £6 to me. If all readers of BING - and other Crosby magazines - were to do this, and the public at large gives some support, then the sales would obviously please Decca and who knows, we might even get some more releases of rare Bing recordings. Even if some members could not afford three extra copies - try for one extra copy. Finally, remember to buy your extra copies from as many record dealers as possible - give them the impression that everybody is going mad for Bing records, and they might stock up their shops and in turn bring these superb pieces of work to the attention of the public."

Well, there's enthusiasm for you! Barry sounds (he may be, for all I know!) a born public-relations man and advertising expert! It is certainly an original idea - but it also gives cause for some sober reflection, don't you think?

For instance, 30 and 40 years ago the idea would not only have been unnecessary - it would have been IMPOSSIBLE! Decca just couldn't press Crosby records wuickly enough for the demand from the shops...when every other customer was saying: "I want the Crosby record of.... please." Imagine, there have been 300,000,000 such requests! Sadly, times have changed. So many people who sigh "Good old Bing..." when they see him on TV films, or hear him on record have surrendered their interest in the record market to the great unmusical drop-outs.

Yet, I am far from pessimistic about these albums. As I remarked upon, they are being excellent displayed in this part of the world - and I'm sure thousands of people all over the country will have their eye caught by such outstanding sleeves. Memories will tug at them.....the halcyon days of "good old Bing...." I have constantly said in these columns that I am ever optimistic of a tremendous Crosby renaissance, a Crosby revival. So many young people have joined us, the ICC. The magic is still overwhelmingly apparent - if the records are properly presented. Yet when one hears, say, Tony Bennett, described as the "greatest singer in the world" (as he has been, though happily, by one who's taste can safely be ignored!) one must hold on to faith!

Barry Adams, by the way, is moving concurrently from Belfast to Londonderry, and the wish of all of us that it will not be a case of "out of the frying pan....!" He tells me he is going to miss his Crosby contacts and is anxious to make new ones. His new address is 3, Culdaff Road, Portstewart, Co. Londonderry, N. Ireland.

Well, before leaving the Coral LPs for the time being, I intend to deal with some of the tracks reissued in DISCROSBY a few pages on....

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RPM MAGAZINE is devoted to the tracing of all types of records, including and especially Bing, as well as other great stars of the years passed. It contains thousands of record for sale and auction in each issue. Advert. rates, at 1p per title to subscribers, are ridiculously low for such a quality-printed magazine. Let RPM find you those 'Wants' or help you dispose of those unwanted records. Another feature is THE RPM DIRECTORY OF COLLECTORS, DEALERS, SHOPS, AND MAGAZINE which lists all the best sources in the UK, US and overseas generally. Subscriptions: £2 for 12 monthly issues, post free; single copies 20p post free. Blank POs, IMO's (payable to Keith Spiller) or Dollar Bills only accepted:

KEITH SPILLER, 11 Kenyon Road, Oakdale, Poole, DORSET.

This sounds an interesting venture and readers may find it of assistance in collecting/selling records.

There is the long-established record magazine, RSVP, which never fails to list many Bing records for sale. This magazine also carries interesting articles and discographical information: write for specimen copy or details to:

PETE SEAGO,
RSVP,
5, Tollett Street,
Stepney Green,
LONDON, E1.

DO YOU HAVE THE LONGINES SET: BING CROSBY'S GOLDEN TREASURY OF SONG?

If not, here is your chance to acquire it, for Michael Crampton has passed to me a complete set in its original leatherette inner, and stout outer cover. Michael insists that this be offered to readers of BING - the proceeds to go to the funds of the ICC, an extraordinarily generous gesture.

This is, to give it its correct name!, BING CROSBY'S TREASURY - THE SONGS I LOVE.

SIX 12" ALBUMS CONTAINING 184 SONGS. Bing does not, of course, six all these songs but three on each side of each record. But by any standards, these are beautiful records from an orchestral point of view. Songs include Where The Blue of the Night; Stormy Weather; Its Easy to Remember; Yours; Say It Isn't So; Friendly Persuasion; South of the Border; Me & My Shadow; Road to Morocco; Ole Buttermilk Sky; In The Chapel In The Moonlight; Cheek to Cheek; Nightingale Sang in Berkely Squarey; I've Heard That Song Before; and scores of other great, standard and favourite songs.

This is the mono version of the set. Normally, my policy is, when I have anything to sell, to state the price. But in this particular case the set is open to offers, bearing in mind the use of the proceeds. So, make an offer! Remember your bid will have to include postage of, say, 50p. Do not be deterred that there will be a rush for this, or that your bid will be too low. In this connection, I would suggest around £4 is a "reserve" price for this excellently packed set of six albums.

MANY READERS ARE STILL SEARCHING FOR "CALL ME LUCKY" - Bing's autobiography. Not to raise hopes unduly, I do not have a spare copy of the book. But I DO have an edition of READER'S DIGEST "CONDENSED BOOKS", which includes "Call Me Lucky" in a abridged version. This consists of about 64 pages, and is illustrated. The other books condensed are "Beyond This Place (A.J.CRONIN);

Sharks & Little Fish (WOLFGANG OLL); The 3 Faces of Eve; and The Green Helmet, by JOHN CLEARY. All told, there are 504 pages in this hard-cover book, which is still in its original dust-cover. Anyone who feels they can make do with this pending getting a copy of the complete "Call Me Lucky" is invited, also, to make an offer. Once again the proceeds are for the funds.

Finally, a few copies of Part 4 of THE ROAD TO BING CROSBY discography, covering the period 9.4.51 virtually to date, and a few V-Disc Supplements, have come to hand and are offered for sale.

For all these items: Longines Set; "Call Me Lucky" book; and the discography Part 4 write only in the first instance to me: REG BRISTO, 7, Greenmeadow Close, Cwmbran, Mon, NP4 3NR., with your offer. I much regret to sound churlish but I must confine these offers to readers in the UK on account of postal charges, and other considerations.

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BING IN LONDON AGAIN

Everyone will be aware that the Maestro flew into London again - and out fairly sharpish! I'm sure earlier pages cover his fleeting visit fully.... indeed, I'm waiting to see what other enthusiasts were fortunate to greet Bing this time in addition to the happy experience of Martin Clements reported herein.

This was, of course, on August 1 and 2 last: the ever-alert, ever-faithful, Leslie Gaylor was well- primed and let me know not only that Bing was coming to London next day - but also the hotel at which he would be staying! Staffords, of course. I thought I was well acquainted with West End hotels - by name, not by inhabiting them! - but Staffords is new to me. Perhaps they permit Bing to practice his golf-shots on the plush carpets! Unlike the celebrated establishment that, to their regret, asked him to desist from such a pastime'.

But I seem fated. I had just welcomed a houseful of visitors (relatives at that) who had arrived for a holiday and it was quite impossible to me to depart for London. To my great regret, naturally. I must be lucky though, one day.

Possibly Bing opts for these more obscure hotels as part of his desire for no publicity these days. But of course that is a forlorn hope. Bing always has and always will be "news" when he visits Britain, and happily, he shows an increasing tendency to do this.

An excellent picture of Bing and Kathy appeared in The Daily Mirror, and paragraphs in many others. As always, the BBC were quick off the mark, announcing on radio his arrival - and several interviews were taped. I liked the little incident reported in one paper: the interviewer got back to Broadcasting House and found that owing to some technical hitch his tape was blank. Bing was reported as saying "Not to worry old son - come back and we'll do it all again..." I often think Bing must be an interviewer's "dream" - no black eyes handed out, no cameras smashed, no petulance, no arrogance. Instead, a willing and happy acceptance that the British public will ALWAYS want to hear Bing. As I said earlier..."Good ol' Bing....."

Bing was on his way to Kenya for another camera-shooting safari - leading the life he is happy to profess he so enjoys. And its great to know he does: soon he will be back in Scotland for his golf tournament and according to my mail, a fair number of readers - by coincidence perhaps! - are taking late holidays - in Scotland, of course.

Someone has told me - though I'm blessed if I can put my hand on the letter now - that Bing has been asked to record "Marching Along Together" to be played at the Olympic Games in Munich. A wonderful idea, too, for who has done more to cement friendship internationally than Mr. C? The universal voice - the universal appeal of that voice. His rich tones gracing the Olympic Games with such an idealistic lyric is a happy thought indeed.

CHRISTMAS!. CHRISTMAS!! CHRISTMAS !!!

Seems a long way off still as I write this on a sunny August morning - but of course, its just around the corner, perhaps a cosy little corner! By delaying this and the previous issue we should now have adjusted the timetable so that you get an issue of BING which can appropriately be called A BUMPER CHRISTMAS ISSUE. If you have any particular ideas for such an issue, a new Christmas Crosby story, anecdote, memory, etc. we'll be glad to have it. Meanwhile, you will no doubt be getting the Christmas albums dusted off and ready.....

CROSBY A MEMOIR

One of the greatest events that has ever happened to me, something that I've wished for for many, many, years happened to me on the 1st of August, 1972 - and I must tell you about it!

It was a Wednesday and by pure chance, I happened to have a day off from work so I had decided to go to the cinema. It was getting on for one o'clock so I put the radio on to listen to 'The World At One' news programme. What do you think? I heard the announcer saying'we would be talking to Mr. Crosby who had just arrived in London from America from America and would be staying in London for only one day....' He added that Bing was with his wife and 12-year-old daughter, and was on his way to Kenya - but you know that part of the story.

I thought what a wonderful thing it would be if I could only get to meet Mr. Crosby; chat, get his autograph! I dismissed the idea as hopeless. For a start, I didn't have any idea where to look for him.

Then, on impulse, I found myself ringing the BBC! I was told that Bing was staying at Staffords in St. James Place - and added again that he would only be there for a short while.

Then events seemed to take hold of me! Seeing I live only six miles from the West End I hopped on a No. 9 bus which would practically take me all the way there. I got as far as Hammersmith, and inevitably, the bus was confronted by the usual massive traffic jam. What to do? If there was indeed the slightest chance to say 'Hello' to Bing Crosby I did not want to miss it. So I got on a taxi which took me all the way there - right to the door! The hotel was in a cul-de-sac: I went in and asked if Mr. Crosby was in the hotel - and would he sign his autograph for me?

But alas, the porter, or receptionist, said he was out at the moment and he just did not know when he would be back. You can imagine how crestfallen and disappointed I was after my impetuous dash. I didn't really know what to do.

I had put on my best suit; brushed my hair back sprucely; shaved for the second time that day - all special, you might say, to meet the great Bing Crosby. I waited around the foyer of the hotel for perhaps half-an-hour, unwilling to accept that I was going to fail in my sudden opportunity for the thrill of a lifetime. I am 29, by the way....

Then I decided I couldn't hang around in the hotel, around the entrance, any longer without being, possibly, a nuisance. I decided to walk around the West End streets for a while and take another chance at Staffords later on. I started walking down the street....and then, unbelievably but instantly recognisable, 15 yards from me, coming round a slight bend, was the great man himself! The man I had so much wanted to meet! BING CROSBY! Bing was geniality itself; I got my autograph after all - on the back of a copy of BING indeed! What a happy, wonderful, day it was - certainly one of the greatest moments of my life.

Well, that was the happy experience of MARTIN CLEMENTS, 51 Essex Court, Barnes, SW13. A lovely story, and well-told too. Martin is a recently enrolled member of the ICC - and as always, I was startled to learn that such a knowledgeable admirer of Bing Crosby was still under 30 years of age! Congratulations Martin - and I'm sure we all share your delight.

IF WE MIGHT CALL MARTIN CLEMENT'S CAMEO AS A "MODERN" ONE, HERE IS A MORE "ANCIENT" ONE: JUST AS INTRIGUING AND PRESENTING, TOO, A SLIGHT MYSTERY.

This cameo, considerably more sombre, comes from HAROLD WILSON, 10 Leslie Avenue, Thornton-Cleveleys, Nr. Blackpool, FY5 4PE. "Our" Harold is, of course, not the Leader of the Opposition - though I recollect reading somewhere some years ago that that Harold Wilson was indeed a Crosby fan: Harold writes:

> During World War II I was a reluctant guest of the Japanese for 3½ years. VJ Day found me in a prison camp about 70 miles from the Manchurian border in North Korea. After being released by the Russians pouring down from the North they subsequently asked if there was anything we required to make life a bit easier while awaiting repatriation.
>
> After having been starved of music (apart from most other essentials of life!) I asked a burly Russian NCO for a radio, or anything capable of making or producing music. As this was a typical Asiatic village I wasn't too optimistic but after shaking his head, no doubt thinking the long internment had affected my sanity, off went the Russian.
>
> Lo and Behold! about two hours later he came back with a battered old gramophone that looked as if it had come out of the Ark - and an old 78 that appeared to have been used for serving rice on! The disc turned out to be Bing's "Mandy Is Two "/"Miss You". Needless to say, it was played until the very grooves were almost worn through.
>
> That record came all the way home with me; I have it still - and it still plays in a fashion. It was while dusting off my 78s the other day that the memory of this incident came flooding back to me. Even today it is difficult to describe the impact it had one me - and others. It was, perhaps, symbolic that a Bing Crosby record was our first linking up with civilisation on being released from Japanese imprisonment. And you will not need me to tell you that this record will remain a very valued item in my collection.
>
> As a postscript, the thing that has always puzzled me to this day is: this was a 1942 recording, so how on earth did it get to this remote Asiatic village during the the war years??

Release after such a grim ordeal MUST have been one of the greatest moments of Harold's life, and it is not difficult to realise the feeling he has for this particular record. What a happy coincidence that Bing should play such a part, via a recording, in this drmatic incident. As to how the record came to be there - well, perhaps it would be a pity to ponder too deeply and spoil the mystique of this little cameo. Suffice to say, I feel, that true indeed it is that Bing's records found their way to every corner of the world, even in world-war-time.

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"THE A - Z OF BING CROSBY" : It is necessary to remind readers who reserved copies of this publication that they should take up their copy without undue delay. The demand from non-reservists is proving heavy and the stock printed for such demands is almost exhausted. Should these reserved copies not be demanded within say a month it will be assumed that they are no longer required and will be disposed of to anyone writing for them. To remind you, this is an ICC publication, produced by Bert Bishop and John Bassett, alphabetically listing all Bing's recordings from 1926 virtually to date - even including an insertion of the as yet unissued Bing 'n' Basie album. Also alpahetically are included Bing's musical accompanists and the other personalities he has sung with on commercial records. The price is £1, post paid: write to Reg Bristo, 7, Greenmeadow Close, CWMBRAN, MON NP4 3NR. for your copy of this invaluable addition to Crosbyana.

MATRIMONY STRIKES AGAIN! - "O PROMISE ME ! " .....

Almost as if he was waiting for someone to show him the way ("Come in, the water's fine...!") another rabid admirer in our ranks is entering the realms of matrimony! I do not for one moment suggest that this was the case, but it does follow rather quickly on the plunge of our Editor, John Bassett, last July.... I referred earlier to a momentous letter from Michael Crampton of Leeds. This is why, and I quote:

> "Hold your breath for momentous news! Judy and I will be getting married on October 14th - and at this time I'm negotiating the purchase of a house!"

I have had the very real pleasure of meeting Judy - and must confess I've heard no murmurings from her regarding Michael's Crosby "obsession". This must be just as well, I fear! On the other hand, Mike HAS got virtually a complete collection of Crosby (records and tapes) and has, perhaps, seen the last of his main expenditure in such a worthwhile direction. Michael is, perhaps, the most remarkable Crosby collector of all time if one considers all the circumstances. To wit, he joined the (then) Crosby Society when he was 14 - because a great friend of his, Mr. and Mrs. Throp, had allowed him to play a few old 78s on their gramophone! That must have been about 14-15 years ago. Since then he has followed the pursuit of Crosby collecting with relentless dedication. He has met Bing (at Cockermouth); has travelled the country from the South coast to Scotland and visited every Crosby collector of standing in the process. He has, most happily, made several detours Westwards and we in Cwmbran (and earlier Cardiff) have had the great pleasure of entertaining Michael several times in the past half-dozen years. His never-failing charm and courtesy (not to mention his handsome looks!) ensure a warm welcome where'er he goes.

As most readers will know, Michael some years ago instituted his annual Crosby parties/meetings at his home in Leeds, providing in the process a feast of Crosbyana once a year for up to forty people at a time.

AND IN THIS CONNECTION, THIS IS A GOOD POINT AT WHICH TO ANNOUNCE THAT THE PARTY THIS YEAR WILL TAKE PLACE ON SEPTEMBER 24TH NEXT - just 20 days before his plunge into the blessed state of wedlock. Well, that's how I have heard it described. Those intending to visit Leeds for this event should communicate with Michael immediately at 1, Langbar Square, Whinmoor, LEEDS, LS14 5EP.

We can immediately, and from the heart, wish Michael and Judy all happiness, and every success in their marriage. Judy, incidentally, follows the demanding profession of nurse and is one of those invaluable young women who follow such a humanitarian pursuit with true vocation.

It may be argued that getting married is ALWAYS difficult for young people - and it probably is. But has it ever been quite so difficult as it is now, when young couples seeking one of the first necessities of life - a roof over their heads - are considered fair, indeed legal, game for shameless "gazumpers" and, to my mind, almost as shameless building societies who continue to raise their mortgage rates with sickening regularity whilst urbane gentlemen appear on the TV to assure us why it is necessary. Usually because Bank Rate has gone up. One cannot fail to notice, however, that they never come on to urbanely explain that they can now lower mortage rates because Bank Rate has been reduced. 'Tis indeed a curious world in which we live. But, nevertheless, all the best Michael & Judy.

BING CROSBY No 16

THE LEGEND ON BING'S RECORD LABELS.

ACCOMPANIED BY—

ORGANISTS

HELEN CRAWFORD :
EDDIE DUNSTEDTER :
UN-NAMED.

Previously in this Series:

1. John Scott Trotter.
2. Victor Young.
3. Paul Whiteman.
4. Buddy Cole.
5. Vic Schoen.
6. Gus Arnheim.
7. The Dorsey Brothers.
8. Jimmie Grier.
9. Bob Crosby.
10. Lennie Hayton.
11. Georgie Stoll.
12. Billy May.
13. The McIntires - Lani & Dick and Harry Owens.
14. Perry Botkin.
15. Russ Morgan.

There is no instrument quite like the organ in its effect on people's emotions! At least, that is my impression...

I find people either love them with unbelievable devotion, or they hate 'em!

Myself? I like them very much indeed, but I would add the proviso that it must be played by a good MUSICIAN. The relevance of this qualification will be apparent further on.

Organs, because they were installed in thousands of cinemas and theatres, became a substantial part of the 1930's musical scene. Names like Reginald Dixon, Reginald Foort, Jesse Crawford, Sandy McPherson, Robinson Cleaver, Sydney Torch and many, many others - including women organists - became literally household names.

Firstly they started replacing orchestras in cinemas to accompany silent movies. Then when "talkies" came they were used to fill in gaps and to provide a musical interlude, mixing up light classics, popular music, and community singing in a very successful format. Organists of the calibre mentioned, of course, became regular - and popular - broadcasters. Names like Wurlitzer, Compton and Christie come readily to mind as the makers of these musical masterpieces - or monstrosities, according to the effect organs have on you.

These organs were "monsters" in size: employing hundreds of pipes, ranging in size from the thickness of a tin-whistle to the girth of a fair-sized man! They incorporated all kinds of musical effects and novelties, so that among other things the organist could produce a bird whistle - or a train rushing through a tunnel. The console, or keyboard, could contain up to five manuals - keyboards - to use the technical term. They were supplied with air for the tremendous sounds they could produce by means of an electric motor pump.

An odd thing is that, while cinemas have closed down by the thousand since television and Bingo, the organ is one 1930's instrument that has turned full circle in that it faded out almost entirely, but is now back as strong as ever, albeit in a totally different guise.

Today organs are once more enjoying a tremendous vogue, and while Wurlitzer makes organs still, names like Hammond and Lowry are much more prominent. For organs have, of course, gone "electronic". Now the flowing sounds are produced not from banks of pipes but from amplified transistor circuits; thus they are much more convenient, much easier to install, much easier indeed to transport. The reason they are so popular today is the same one as in the 20's and 30's - expertly played they have the tonal range of a large orchestra - for the cost of one player! As I said earlier, however, for my taste they must be good musicians; not the chord-vampers of organs so popular in the so-called "pop" groups of today.

And that seems to be an overlong introduction to the records Bing has made with organ accompaniment! These records are as follows:

HELEN CRAWFORD:	R'ding Date	Remarks.
1. Can't We Talk It Over.	21.12.31.	Paramount Theatre Organ.
2. I Found You.	"	" " "
EDDIE DUNSTEDTER:		
3. There's A Goldmine in the Sky.	12.11.37	
4. When The Organ Played 'O Promise Me'	"	
5. Let's Waltz for Old Time's Sake	15.11.37	Hammond Organ.
6. In The Mission By The Sea.	"	" "
7. Little Lady Make-Believe.	25.4.38	
8. When Mother Nature Sings Her Lullaby.	"	
UN-NAMED ORGANISTS:		
9. Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Alm'ty	6.5.49	With the Ken Darby Choir.
10. Mother Dear, O Pray For me.	"	"
11. O Lord I am Not Worthy.	"	"
12. Rock of Ages.	"	"
13. What A Friend We Have in Jesus.	"	"
14. He Leadeth Me.	"	"
15. All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name.	"	"
16. O God, Our Help In Ages Past.	"	"

It is only fair to point out that organists have appeared on other Crosby records. For instance, the very famous Ethel Smith, who had a million-seller record in her own right with "Tico-Tico", played with the orchestra in "Just A Prayer Away" and perhaps others. And I find myself listening very hard on times to "Hey Jude", still not sure whether or not I can hear an organ! The A - Z of Bing Crosby tells me, too, of an organist by the name of Betty Zins! I don't think I'm aware of this lady - to save me researching perhaps someone will tell me the records she played on! And of course, Bing's long-time Buddy - Cole - played a lot of organ for Bing, but these titles were included in the "Buddy Cole" feature in BING.

Helen Crawford, Bing's first organ accompanist, was indeed, the wife of Jesse Crawford, the "poet of the organ". I understand there was a touch of "gimmickry" about this Bing-Helen recording in that while Helen played the organ, naturally, in the Paramount Theatre, New York, Bing was in a studio complete with earphones adding his vocal. So, to some people's possible surprise, "remote" vocals are far from new! And, perhaps much more importantly, this Helen Crawford effort combines "Can't We Talk It Over?" - issued on the Ace of Hearts Early 30's Vol I - reissued that is - with what is certainly one of the most intriguing of all

Crosby recordings. Tremendously difficult - impossible in fact - to obtain this is, of course, the lovely record of "I Found You". The incredible reason is that quite inexplicably this track was never issued in Britain! Furthermore, it has never been re-issued, e.g. on EP or LP record. This is an occurence - or perhaps a "non-event" to use modern parlance - that can never be satisfactorily explained. Everyone who hears the record is entranced by it - and immediately asks: "Where can I get it?" The simple answer is - You Cannot! Sorry to be so adamant but that is the literal truth! Tape dubbings, and indeed, some "private" recordings in shellac are around. Some of them I've heard are pitiful in quality - but excellent tapings can be obtained.

Mind you, there ARE some 78s in this country - imported by enterprising and diligent collectors who, we may assume, paid well for them. As I say, I much regret being so disheartening but you are most unlikely to say of this record, "I Found You" I found you! Settle for a good taping! You'll have to....

Eddie Dunstedter, I'm afraid, is one of those accompanying characters of Bing's I know nothing about: except that he obviously took his career into the American forces for apart from his organ accompaniments to Bing, he accompanied Mr. Crosby on the following, just to complete Mr. Dunstedter's total of records with Bing:

1.	By the Light of the Silvery Moon.	9.7.42	Captain Eddie Dunstedter &
2.	But Not For Me.	"	his West Coast Army Air Force
3.	Hello Mom.	27.7.42	Training Centre Orchestra.

"Hello Mom" was a big early War-Time hit record, much re-requested on Forces' and civilian radio programmes.

In the third category of organists above - "Un-named" - covers the hymn output of Bing and organ accompaniment was, of course, essential. All these hymns were, with the "Blessing of St. Francis" and the "Peace Prayer of Saint Francis", issued on the "Beloved Hymns" Ace of Hearts album, with its most attractive and appropriate sleeve.

This album, like the Christmas albums, are probably reserved for "special occasions" and not subjected to casual listening, that is, if ANY Crosby album is subjected to "casual" listening.

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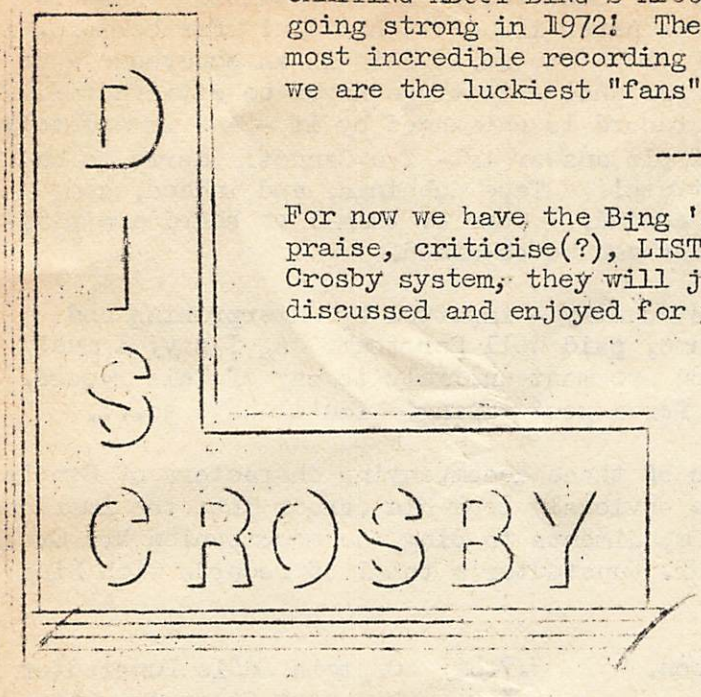

CHATTING ABOUT BING'S RECORDS - started 1926 and still going strong in 1972! The most incredible voice, the most incredible recording career of all time....truly we are the luckiest "fans" ever...

For now we have the Bing 'n Basie titles to digest, praise, criticise(?), LISTEN TO! To absorb into our Crosby system, they will join all the others to be discussed and enjoyed for years to come....

We have to go back 10 years, to 1962 when the unique BING'S HOLLYWOOD series of fifteen albums were released, since we have had four Crosby albums released between issues of BING - the magazine! Four albums forsooth, in this year of 1972.

There is no doubt that the Count Basie band is one of the finest in the world. It is a well-drilled, well-rehearsed, outfit of the highest class of its kind. The powerful, yet subtle, piano of the Count himself remains an impressive feature, and stamping his musical personality on everything his band performs. But if I had been asked to choose the accompanist for Bing's latest album, Count Basie would not only have not appeared in the first 100 names that occurred to me - I doubt if he would have appeared at all! I am certain that the late Jack Kapp, too, would never have dreamed up such a pairing - startling as some of his ideas for Bing were.

This does not mean that I make myself out to be on a par with Mr. Kapp. It merely illustrates, I feel, the complete unlikelihood of Basie 'n Bing - on one album, that is. When I first heard of it - and I believe I said so in these columns - my heart sank. I had aural visions (are THEY possible?) of another Bregman holocaust. The new album isn't quite that bad however, though there are moments when the worst appears about to happen.

The "big band" jazz fan will certainly find plenty to purr over in the playing of the Basie band on the album. There is the inevitable solid beat of the rhythm section, unfaltering, unerring, as anyone who knows the band would have guaranteed. There is the staccato phrasing, the "bluesy" reeds and the aforementioned subtleties of the Count himself on piano, dotting the i's and crossing the t's, of some excellent arrangements - for a big band. Whether or not the accompaniment is, however, subtle enough, or suitable enough, for our Bing is I feel certain, going to cause quite a few differences of opinion among the Bing fraternity.

Who me? Oh, I thought you said pessimistic character, liable to get a crab-apple face! But read on, friends!

BING BASIE

I was saying - I expect I'm already being dubbed the pessimistic character, liable to develop a crab-apple face! But, I hope to redeem myself! What, I wonder, are all you Crosbyites, WE Crosbyites, going to make of BING 'N BASIE? The young'uns, the middlemen, and the veterans? Naturally, we take it as automatic that we're all delighted that Bing in this year of 1972, and well on the way to 50 years after making his first recording, has cut a brand spanking new album. Will the youngsters jump up and down and acclaim it as "Bing's Best Ever!"? Will the others?

Undoubtedly something in the way of a cult has sprung up among singers to sing with the Count Basie Band and our man is the latest to pair up with the Count.

Will some of them - the Crosbyites - listen and puzzle: Is this Bing, that lovely balladeer? Will they accept that this is the "with-it" Bing - in highly sophisticated mood matching, forsooth, the sophistications of the Basie brand of swing/jazz? Well, after some consideration, I think most of us will - I, of course, with the aforementioned reservations.

There will be those, too, who hark back to the lush Scott Trotter arrangements - we won't go back as far as Lennie Hayton, tho' we might include Victor Young - and the other sympathetic arrangements that have backed Bing through the years. And it will, naturally, be argued: How can Count Basie sound like Scott Trotter, Young, etc. etc.? Precisely, he cannot. Furthermore, he doesn't want to! Ah, but there's the rub - IS it a singer's band?

Can a band, which seems ever ready to turn every number into "One O'Clock Jump" or something similar, whatever its considerable, even virtuoso talents, be a suitable vehicle to ride with from a vocal angle? Well, you pays your money (£2 incidentally, tho' I have seen it at £1.99p!) and you will make your choice - and decision. But, you will expect me to state mine more fully, I feel certain.

I was startled to see this album in the shops on August 15, just about a month after the Corals, and in passing, one might mention that if it was a rare experience to have those three albums, how much more unique this particular period becomes when concurrently we have a newly-recorded album to digest - and compare, no matter how odious such comparisons are reputed to be! Though other singers have been known to bewail that "ol' man Crosby, he justs keeps rollin' along", we can only exult in this glorious fact.

I've already said I would never have chosen the Basie band to pair with Bing. So, do I like lush ballads all the time? Assuredly and most certainly NOT. I love Bing's voice in rhythmic style as much as any other. But I would prefer the unsubtle efforts of Bob Scobey, The Slew Foot Five! - Buddy Cole. In other words, a smaller, rip-roaring ensemble. Still, the deed - meaning the Bing n' Basie pairing - has been done. What does it sound like?

On my first run through, I felt some disappointment: one doesn't expect to "run in" a Bing album! Yet there is no doubting that this is a superb performance from Bing and the Count. Incidentally, I paid a fleeting visit to town shortly after the album appeared and was highly delighted to hear the album being belted out in the famous HMV Record Shop in Oxford Street..... I will admit it sounded tremendous and seemed to be attracting attention.

Getting down to details, I infinitely prefer the second side, largely because I find the actual numbers to my taste more than those on side one. In fact, the first two numbers "Put Your Hand In the Hand" and "Snowbird" are the best two

CROSBY numbers on the record, particularly "Snowbird" - just written for Bing's philosophic treatment, and an excellent melody. "Hand in the Hand" is a cute lyric, and like all the songs, beautifully phrased by Bing. But it was at this point - after these two numbers - that I began to feel the need for a change of pace, and when "Little Green Apples" set off at stomp-pace I knew we weren't going to get it! I feel that at least in this respect the "Hey Jude" albums scores over the current one. There IS change of pace, but so slight as to be almost unnoticeable, and this I feel militates against the all-round appeal of the selection. COUNT

When I learned, months ago, that Bing was going to repeat "Little Green Apples" I wondered - honest, I did! - how the Basie band was going to perform a sentimental number of this type. How the Heck could it be done?. Well, the track certainly provides the answer!

One of the few appealing modern lyrics "Little Green Apples" completely loses its poignancy, its appeal, in this verse-less version. A good swinger - certainly, but entirely out of context, I feel. The verse is ESSENTIAL to the song - put on the "Hey Jude" version again and listen to Bing's really moving performance ".....and she stops what she's doing and hurries down to meet me, and I'm ALWAYS late...but she sits waiting patiently....." I mean, why didn't they pick numbers like "Please Don't Talk About Me When I'm Gone" for this treatment?

Similarly, "Sunrise, Sunset" comes in for virtual stomp-treatment and while a sizzling performance from Bing and band, it in no way compares with the sympathetic TV performance we have got used to... I must say I felt Bing was uncomfortable trying to push this song along in such unreal tempo. It lost the undoubted sympathy the composer undoubtedly generated in this song.

"Hangin' Loose" is one of those semi-abstract lyrics hangin' on the one phrase. Seems to meander rather meaningly-less to me, while "Everything is Beautiful" is an undoubted appeal (tongue-in-cheek from Bing I imagine!) on behalf of "hippie" drop-outs! I suppose the essence of my "grouse" is the choice of numbers, sentimental numbers played at an unsentimental tempo!

Possibly Bing is heard to best advantage in "All His Children", despite another unctuous lyric. Mr. C. is in fine voice and concludes with a typical Crosby low-note coda. Oh yes, I would - I HAVE - misled you if I have given the impression that I don't like this albym.

On the other hand, it is mindless hypocrisy to laud everything blindly. With the"criticisms" I've made, I still feel the album is a startling performance from Bing and certainly the "big-band" fans will have plenty, too, to purr over in respect of the Basie band performance. And I will heartily concede that it IS much more likely the sound to succeed today...and after all, that's what we want most, isn't it?

Its a safe bet that our Christmas issue will devote many a page to views on this album. Let's have 'em! Weigh in with yours. We want them - as many as possible. Let this be your forum - or against 'em, if you insist!

I must mention a prominent feature of some of the Basie playings: the use of flute obligatos which come over most effectively as indeed, does the integrity of the Count's piano-playing.

COUNT You will know that the sleeve notes are by Bing's long-time CROSBY

buddy - and admirer. "Here he is (Bing), still adroit, still tasteful, still on top of the current scene, hip to the jive.....". And there are some quite unusual photographs on the reverse of the sleeve, posing an interesting question. We have been led to believe that Bing dubbed over his contribution to Basie's recorded tracks yet this photographs would seem to indicate that Bing was indeed present at the original recording. On the other hand it could easily be that Bing and the Count did get together round a piano to iron out some of the intricacies of the scores. The smart front of the sleeve carries rather surrealistic pictures of the two personalities. Quite an attractive cover - and a nice glossy one, back and front.

All right, put the shot-guns down: it IS a great, swinging record! And no doubt you won't be tardy in telling me so!

A STRANGE - BUT TRUE STORY from new friend JIM BACON, of Whitstable, Kent:

For many years in parts of Kent a popular soft drink has been known as "Bing". The firm traded as "Bing's" for many years and operated from Canterbury. The rear of their vehicles were emblazoned with the words "DRINK BING!"

Some while ago I met the proprietor of the concern, a Mr. Simpson, and I asked him how the name came to be used. The origin of the word, it appeared, was from the surname of the chemist who had originally marketed the drink.

He added a postscript which I thought particularly paradoxical: this was the fact that he, Mr. Simpson, had called his house in Kent - "Crosby"! Not after the one and only but because that was his hometown in Lancashire. Great Crosby, near Liverpool, I assumed. But oddly enough he did not realise the association of the two names until people started - and kept on - pointing it out to him. A strange but true story...

Truly a remarkable association! Nice thought of Jim's to let us have this little story. We have readers in Great Crosby, of course. Indeed, the late-lamented Leslie Phythian, remembered dearly as one of the great Crosby admirers/collectors in the world, lived in Great Crosby. Leslie was apt to whimsically remark that he lived in "a critical assessment" rather than in a geographical address! Great Crosby indeed. But fancy having to have it pointed out to you after you had accidentally combined those two famous names!

Seems the price of the Corals is varying. I know a lot of shops are charging 99p for them, and Bert Bishop says 80p though this may be a misprint for 90p which is the price they appear to be all over South Wales. But the price is always under £1 so they remain an astonishing nargain - one of the biggest of all time.... and I find I cannot consign the "Sierra Sue" 78 to the attic after all! It has "Marcheta" on the reverse - never, so far as I can see, reissued in any form - which is another mystery! The beautiful love song "of old Mexico", an enchanting song virtually made for Bing's resonant tones.

By the way, I regret the absence of pictures in this issue: the truth is that pictures of Bing with which you are not fully familiar are hard to come by. If you have any, good black and white contrast, I would be glad to borrow them. And, I would also like to try and reproduce photographs of our readers - if they can overcome their modesty!

CAN YOU IMAGINE a man selling a drink called "Bing", calling his house "Crosby" - and having to have the appropriateness of it pointed out to him! I wouldn't have thought it possible in Ecuador - let alone England! But Jim assures me it is true....

Anyway, let's have another thought or two on the Corals! The Bing and Andrews Sisters album will certainly serve to remind those of us who needed it, that Jack Kapp's inspiration of teaming Bing and these girls was pure genius. Have you ever heard such musical rapport? It is easy to imagine that any other singer teaming up with the Andrews Sisters so successfully would have maintained a life-time's fame out of it....to Bing, it was a fairly small facet in his incredible mosaic of recording! A mere slice - but indeed, what a slice!

And, furthermore, this album offers intriguing food for thought - for the numbers are mainly "swingers" - but MUSICALLY swingers, too. Great arrangements, played with tremendous elan and zip and the precision and AUTHORITY of the vocalisms quite unbelievable. "Good, Good, Good" - "The Three Caballeros" - "South America Take It Away" - what of the appeal of "Have I Told You Lately?" ? Appeal as to lyric, and appeal as to the way its performed, with first Bing then Patty taking over the "musical phrases" a la trombone....

Three million-sellers in this album, aren't there? "South America/Don't Fence Me In/Pistol Packin' Mama". And another mysterious omission has been made good with the issue over here for the FIRST TIME of "Forsaking All Others". This is another very appealing song, a little subdued and "sad", perhaps but the sort of song that even today if it were "aired" properly would undoubtedly be a big hit. Of this I'm certain. Why wasn't is issued here? Could it be the "Prayer Book" connotation? Forsaking all others....comes from the wedding ceremony, surely. Perhaps young John will tell us - or Michael Crampton if he's swotting it up! They used to be very pernickety over such things in days gone by. Remember, "Love Thy Neighbour" met criticism from some quarters - quickly subdued - for the same reason.

Truly a wonderful album - and as Bert Bishop has pointed out, one of the best things about it must be that it is labelled "Volume I"! Good, good, EXCELLENT!

How nice that two of our "own" Ray Noble's numbers are included in "I Love You Truly" - "The Touch of Your Lips" and "The Very Thought of You ". It also includes, of course, the very first two numbers Bing made for his new Decca contract in 1934 - "I Love You Truly " and "Just A-Wearying For You". I note that Geoff. Milne remarks in his sleeve notes on this album "...but almost certainly the style he will be best remembered for is the ballad..." I feel sure this is true, and this album is eloquent testimony to that belief.

Well, we have the old and the modern Bing served up in most tasteful, vivid, style. They, the four albums, offer endless opportunities for reflection, enjoyment, and - wonderment!

ERRATA: I see I have printed the word "six" instead of "sing" on p.45! How careless can I get. Please read it as "sing".

Readers are reminded they are allowed to advertise, modestly, (say half a dozen lines) without any charge: this is to help the free circulation of records between readers with mutual benefit; tapes, photographs, cuttings, etc. etc. also come into this category. The facility is there and you are very welcome to use it.

IT IS A LITTLE SAD THAT OUR AUSTRALIAN READERS WILL GET THIS ISSUE FOR CHRISTMAS! Still, we wish them a great time, blue skies, sunny beaches - with not a yule log or a sparrow in the snow in sight! Happy Christmas, Cobbers. We enjoyed the Test series, incidentally, even if Lillee did bowl a bit too fast for some of us!

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT!!!

7th ANNUAL MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL CROSBY CIRCLE: Sunday 24 Sept. 1972 at the home of MICHAEL CRAMPTON, 1, Langbar Square, LEEDS, LS14 5EP, Yorks.

Programme: Among other items:

The prospects and present position of the I.C.C. - Reg Bristo.

Greetings from distant friends.

Some rare Bing....

First-half Requests: Presented on tape by Mick Drury.

TEA.

Second-half Requests: " " " " "

Discussions galore: Bing more 'n More! 100% Dedicated Bing Company!

Michael asks: Please advise me of your intention to come to the meeting by sending a PO value 20p as a token donation to expenses. At the same time, will you please let me have your "request" for Mick's tape - within one week of receiving this issue of BING.

GET IN AS SOON AS POSSIBLE! CAN'T TAKE MANY MORE THAN FORTY !!!!

BILLY SCOTT-COOMBER? BILLY SCOTT COOMBER?? Ber Bishop reported him as being in the radio programme on Bing - "a pioneer of crooning in this country" Does the name mean anything to you? Well, if you remember the wonderful, nostalgic days of the "wireless" - Jack Payne and his BBC Dance Orchestra, Savoy Hill, - you will remember Billy with affection for he sang with this famous band. If you are too young to remember these golden days (in the musical sense!) Billy Scott-Coomber was indeed a very regular singer on the wireless. He was a household name as vocalist with Jack Payne. Whichever you are you should read GOLDEN YEARS, which covers the golden era of dance bands and personalities of the radio, stage, etc. etc. Many readers of BING also find GOLDEN YEARS of consuming and biding interest. Annual subscription is £1.05p - four issues, quarterly. GOLDEN YEARS, edited by yours truly, REG BRISTO, is widely recognised as the finest magazine in its field - tho' I says it as shouldn't! But its OTHERS that tell me that!

Al Bowlly, Lew Stone, Roy Fox, Maurice Winnick, Phyllis Robins, Henry Hall, Anne Shelton...Ambrose!..Denny Dennis...Harry Roy...you'll find 'em all in GOLDEN YEARS. Write to me for a sample copy! You'll want to be on the list!

Our good friend, Olive Gregory, of Wirral writes, among other things of....

"Thinking of Bing and Louis brings to mind the two of them on the David Frost Show. Did you see 'Road to Utopia'? Bing's mannerisms and gestures at the end of his song 'It's Anybody's Spring' were identical in every way to those which he did when first making his appearance on the Frost Show. Do you remember? Its really remarkable how he has changed so little in this respect in nearly 30-years. In fact, I would say he hasn't changed one iota.....he's on again on Tuesday in 'The Road to Morocco' - WHOOPEE!"

Whoopee indeed ! Agree, Bing's mannerisms haven't changed and I saw "Morocco". Hands up those who did NOT! Always hear something new when these films come around. And Bing singing "Moonlight Becomes You", dressed so immaculately (for a change!)

- wonderful treat again. Well, its been Bing on the radio, Bing on the telly, Bing in the papers, and assuredly Bing on RECORD again. Surely a reaffirmation of faith for all of us! What's that? Who needs any reaffirmation? Quite right.... but its great, just the same, isn't it! Bing remains the towering international superstar of all time. Though, I might add, when I see and hear some of the characters who are described as "superstars" in the present world of entertainment, I hesitate to use it about Mr. Crosby. Still - why not use it when, for once, it really is as true as ever it can be.

No pictures: but you do get sixty pages full of script to read! Hope you enjoy this issue. And sincere thanks from young John and I at the many, many, letters of praise and encouragement. We do NOT waste space printing these, but be under no illusions, your great, appreciative, letters are really tremendous and take all the sting out of the hard work involved. But then, have you noticed, Crosby people are usually tops - like the Maestro.

"Congratulations to you and the team. A - Z is a unique reference work. A 'must' for all enthusiasts of Bing Crosby. Without doubt, the publication will become a much sought-after item and a rarity in the years to come. In my humble opinion it is worth at least double its cost. Thank you all!"

And thank <u>you</u> Norman for saying so neatly what so many other readers have said.

AN ASTONISHING STORY TOO FROM N. IRELAND: seems Neil Hunter, Barry Adams and John Jones had a tip that there were some brand-new 78s! in a warehouse in Dublin! And the tip was accurate! They could hardly believe their eyes. Well might they ask: How can there be such a treasure trove in this day and age? But they went - and the 78's were there. Mind you, they haven't told me the titles! I had a most amusing description of the expedition south. As they hunted through this unbelievable "find" they were watched by a stern-visaged elderly woman who seemed to look upon them as positive enemies! In fact, so unpleasant did this woman appear that they actually had a plan to put down the money and fly with their treasures in the case of trouble! But, they got away safely. I feel they must tell us more of this incredible story.

GEORGE PATMORE of Chelmsford, Essex spotted a "racing" story: We all know of Bing's great interest in horse-racing and baseball - so did you spot the oblique connection between this year's Derby winnter - "Roberto" - and Bing? "Roberto" is named after Roberto Clemente, star baseball player fot the Pittsburgh Pirates and the hero of last year's world series. I think Bing has an interested in the P.P.!"

Smart work, George....

Well, it was hard luck for all those who took their holidays in the early summer - but it bucked up later on, didn't it? Still a splendid day as I finish up this issue. Hope you enjoyed your holidays! I'm having a few days - only a few days, mark you, as soon as I've posted this issue off. But I'll be back to deal expeditiously with your requests for the various items available.

A word to our Australian friends, whom we readily recognise as towers of strength in the world of Bing Crosby collecting and interest. John and I are a little disconcerted that the fine literary contributions seem to have dried up. Aussies are keeping in touch singly - but the many projects they had running have come to an abrupt end. We regret this very much, and would be delighted if they were resumed - and, our thanks in advance!

Now, its happy listening - we've certainly got plenty new to listen to. And let us have those firm views on BING 'N BASIE ! Let us have your news and views on EVERYTHING in the wonderful world of Bing Crosby.

TILL THE CHRISTMAS ISSUE - CHEERS!